

Palestinian refugees march to remember homes lost with Israel's creation

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Hundreds of Palestinian refugee schoolchildren held a "march of the keys" Wednesday to mark the 50th anniversary of the loss of their family homes in what is now Israel.

Around 500 pupils from the Daheishet refugee camp in Bethlehem joined the march, some carrying the real keys of their families' lost homes and others bearing symbolic wooden keys.

"We're returning with our keys, never forget the keys," chanted the children as they marched carrying a banner reading "Palestine be free" in the direction of the Israeli border, accompanied by teachers and a few Palestinian policemen.

But police prevented the march from approaching an Israeli army checkpoint at the edge of the Bethlehem self-rule area in a bid to prevent any friction.

"We are marching today to remember our nation and our villages," said Nimar Abdullah, 68, one of a group of elderly men who saw the marchers off at the entrance to Daheishet, each holding a large metal key from their former homes.

"We want peace, peace benefits all," said Mr. Abdullah. "But Israel is not willing to make peace," he said, referring to the 14-month-old deadlock in negotiations between the Palestinian leadership and the right-wing government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Wednesday's march was

one of a series of events organised this week to commemorate what Arabs call Al Nakbeh — the catastrophe — which befell Palestinians during the war surrounding Israel's creation 50 years ago.

The highlight of the week will be a simultaneous mass march in villages and towns throughout the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and in Arab east Jerusalem which Palestinians hope to gather one million people on Thursday, the anniversary of the proclamation of Israel's independence.

Israeli security officials warned of the possibility of clashes between Israeli troops and the protesters on Thursday, although the march's organisers have said they want to avoid any violence.

Tensions have been heightened by the prolonged deadlock in negotiations with Israel, whose prime minister is due to hold talks in Washington Wednesday on U.S. peace proposals which his right-wing government has so far rejected — notably because they would require him to cede more West Bank land than he is willing to yield.

The Palestinians have planned the marches not only to lament the Nakbeh, but also to promote their demand for a Palestinian state as the outcome of the stalled Oslo peace negotiations with Israel.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has repeatedly declared in recent weeks that he will unilaterally proclaim

a state if the negotiations are not successfully concluded by the May 4, 1999, deadline set out in the Oslo interim peace accords.

In a demonstration similar to the one in Daheishet, about 300 refugee children also marched Wednesday in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Some 1,000 supporters of Hamas also held a rally in the Islamic University in Gaza City, where protesters burned Mr. Netanyahu in effigy and set fire to Israeli flags.

In Wednesday's marches, many children wore signs around their necks with the names of Arab villages inside what is now Israel which were destroyed or occupied by Jews in the 1948 war — Deir Yassin, Bir Al Saba, Al Breij, Tabaria, Jerash, Wad Fukim.

The children in Bethlehem carried banners proclaiming the "permanent right" of the refugees to return to their homes.

"This is the key to my house in occupied Palestine. We have kept the keys for 50 years," one banner read.

During the war which erupted on May 14, 1948, as Arab armies sought to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, some 700,000 Arabs fled or were forced out of their homes in areas which fell to Jewish fighters.

More than 450 Arab villages were destroyed during the war, often razed by the Jewish forces in a policy designed to ensure the fledgling state would have a Jewish majority.



ARAB MAN STABBED TO DEATH IN JERUSALEM: Olive branches are placed on the body of Khayri Musa Al Kam, a 51-year-old Arab man, after he was stabbed to death early Wednesday in an ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighbourhood. Police believe the attacker is Jewish and is a serial attacker who has stabbed Arabs six times within three months. This is the first of the knifings to prove fatal. This attack took place some 300 metres from where another Arab was stabbed last Thursday (Reuters photo)

Palestinian students burn Netanyahu effigy, Israeli flag

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Some 1,000 Palestinian students demonstrated Wednesday in Gaza City, burning Israeli flags and an effigy of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a protest called to mark the Nakbeh anniversary.

The students, including supporters of Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction of the PLO, Hamas and other

groups, marched through the Islamic University in Gaza, an AFP correspondent said.

Masked students burned Israeli flags and a dummy topped by a large photo of Mr. Netanyahu, as speakers condemned the right-wing prime minister's hard-line stance in the peace process, which has been deadlocked for 14 months.

"The Israelis must know that we set off the Intifada, and we can put an end to the arrogance of [Netanyahu's] government," said Fatah student leader Abdul Hakim Awad, referring to the 1987-1994 intifada uprising against the Israeli occupation.

An official from the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), Ismail

Thousands march in Istanbul to protest attack on human rights activist

ISTANBUL (AFP) — Thousands turned out in downtown Istanbul on Wednesday to protest the assassination attempt on human rights activist Akin Birdal.

Mr. Birdal, chairman of Turkey's Human Rights Association (IHD), was still fighting for his life in an Ankara emergency ward, a day after unidentified gunmen pumped six bullets into him.

"He is still in mortal danger," the hospital's chief doctor said. "We won't know for at least another twelve hours whether his vital functions will resume their normal functions."

The protesters gathered outside the IHD's Istanbul office and marched down the city's main shopping street to Galatasaray square, where

police on Saturday forcibly dispersed the weekly silent watch held by mothers of missing persons.

Both Mr. Birdal and the "Saturday Mothers" had been denounced as supporters of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in the alleged confessions of a renegade PKK commander published by Turkish papers two weeks ago.

"The gangs will pay," the protesters chanted in an allusion to the infamous execution squads thought to have been set up by intelligence agents and criminals in Turkey in the early 90s.

The IHD cannot be silenced," was another slogan chanted by the crowd. Police kept a low profile during the march.

Anger in Israeli army over drilling for 50th anniversary parade

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli soldiers rarely do parade drills and their commanders would like to keep it that way.

The army is furious that thousands of soldiers have been taken off battle training to drill for a large military parade later this month, the Haaretz daily reported Wednesday. The waste of time was "a scandal," the newspaper quoted an armoured corps officer as saying.

But if the troops want to be ready for the May 24 march through Jerusalem — part of Israel's 50th anniversary celebrations — they'll need all the practice they can get.

At ceremonies, soldiers are often out of step. Rifles slope at different angles. Bandsmen read their music off a sheet of paper pinned to the shirt of the musician in front. Soldiers hardly ever salute, and when they do they look embarrassed. They even smile and wink at the

TV cameras during graduation parades.

Israeli Legislator Ephraim Sneh, a retired brigadier general, said it is more important to prepare for war than parades, but that he is hopeful soldiers will eventually master marching in formation.

"Our defence problems are greater than those of other countries. But when we do treat a parade seriously we are as smart as any in the world," Mr. Sneh said.

Turkish court acquits politician of revealing military secrets

ANKARA (AP) — A court on Wednesday acquitted a politician of revealing military secrets, saying there was not enough evidence against him.

Hasan Celal Guzel, leader of the small, right-of-centre New Birth Party, was charged last August after he demanded that a group of generals be prosecuted for planning a coup.

Along with his demand, he gave the court documents indicating that an anti-Islamist military group had been set up.

The court rejected his charges against

the generals. Instead, Mr. Guzel was prosecuted on charges of revealing military secrets.

In his defence, Mr. Guzel said the documents were made public before he gave them to the court.

Turkey was rife with coup rumours at the time. The powerful military, which sees itself as the guardian of the secular system, eventually pressured the Islamist government into resigning.

The new government is under similar pressure.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwait repatriates three Iraqi prisoners

BAGHDAD (AP) — Kuwait on Wednesday repatriated three Iraqi brothers imprisoned for seven years for collaborating with Iraq after Baghdad's 1990 invasion of the emirate. The deportation of Fadil Sayed Mehdi, 32, and his brothers, Salem, 30 and Mohammed, 26, was supervised by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported. Kuwait's interior ministry confirmed that the men were deported. The INA quoted the brothers as saying they had been in prison since 1991. It said they were born in Kuwait and that their father had lived in the emirate since 1953. The agency also quoted the brothers as saying that two Iraqi prisoners were tortured to death in Kuwait's central prison, where they were held for some time.

Iranian floods kill 10

TEHRAN (AP) — Floods caused by heavy rains have killed at least 10 people and injured 25 in northwestern Iran, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported Wednesday. The Red Crescent Society, the Islamic equivalent of the Red Cross, has sent relief aid to east Azerbaijan province, the site of Tuesday's flooding, and set up temporary shelter for people whose homes were destroyed by the floods, the agency said.

Turkish woman kidnaps own daughter for ransom

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish police Wednesday arrested a woman for kidnapping her own daughter to obtain a ransom from her estranged husband, the Anatolia news agency said. Seven-year-old Duygu Arık disappeared several days ago from her Ankara home where she was living with her father who was about to divorce his wife. A man, who was later understood to be the mother's new lover, telephoned the father on Tuesday and demanded \$6,000 for the little girl's release, Anatolia said. Nazire Arık, the mother, and her lover were arrested by the police as they met the husband to get the ransom. Duygu was then freed and delivered to her father.

Syria urges U.S. be dropped as cosponsor of peace talks

DAMASCUS (AP) — Angry at U.S. handling of stalemate in peace talks, a Syrian paper on Wednesday urged dropping the United States as cosponsor of the talks and turning to others in the international community instead.

"The world will always remember with sarcasm and resentment how a country with the weight of the United States stood crippled in the face of the slap it received" from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said the state-owned daily Al Thawra.

The newspaper, frequently used to express the government's views, referred to Mr. Netanyahu's refusal to accept a U.S. compromise of with-

drawing from 13 per cent more land in the West Bank as a way to restart peace talks.

"Those who are concerned and badly affected by Washington's passiveness should strip the United States of the peace initiative before it's too late," Al Thawra said in an editorial.

Washington has shown itself incapable of being an honest broker and, by not taking a decisive stance, it is prolonging the crisis and pushing the situation in the region to the abyss of an explosion," the paper said.

"Washington's insistence on holding all the cards and excluding the international community from the peace process... is a deadly adven-

ture and a waste of time," it added.

Syria has frequently urged that European nations have a greater role in the peace process. The United States and Russia have been cosponsors of peace talks since they began in 1991, but Washington has in effect played the leading role.

In another article, the editor of the official Syrian Arab News Agency, Fayeze Sayegh, urged Washington to react to the Netanyahu's snub to protect its own standing.

"We no longer ask the United States to win peace for the region, nor to put an end to Zionist terrorism against the Arabs," he wrote. "We only ask it to avenge itself and to uphold its dignity."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

Thursday Programmes
15:10Cartoon — Dinky Dis
15:30Cartoon — The Animal Park
16:00L'Ecole des Fars
16:30 Doc. — Blue Water
17:00N.B.A.
18:00 Drama — The Burned Bridge
19:00Le Journal
19:15Science Magazine
19:30News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Big Brother
20:00 Doc. — The Great
20:30 Drama — Dr. Quin the
21:20 The Oprah Winfrey
22:00News in English
22:30 Feature film: "My Life"
00:15 Comedy — Can't Hurry
00:50End of T.X.

Friday Programmes
15:10 Cartoon — The Adventures
15:30Cartoon — Wishbone
16:00He Shoots, He Scores
16:30Tarzan
17:30 French Programme —
Game Show
19:00Le Journal
19:15French Programme
19:30News Headlines
19:35Comedy — "The
20:00 Documentary — Life on
20:30Doc. — The Brain

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

21:10Drama: "Babylon-5"
22:00News in English
22:30 Mini-series — Nutsucker
(P.I.)
23:59End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:06Fajr
05:35(Sunrise) Duha
12:32Dhuhr
16:12Asr
19:29Maghrib
20:57Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweetfield, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel.
4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
4624590/4624811
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox
Church Tel. 771751
Armanian International Church
Tel. 865897
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter
Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la
Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel.
4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweit-
field Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church
Tel. 4624757
The English-Language
Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel.
892679
The Baptist Church Tel.
4628052
The Armenian Catholic
Church Tel. 771331
The Armenian Orthodox
Church Tel. 775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
of Meteorology
Fine weather conditions will
prevail during the weekend
becoming cool at night. Skies
will be partly cloudy with a
chance of scattered showers
particularly in the northern
parts of the Kingdom and
winds westerly to northwesterly
moderate to active. In
Aqaba, it will be fine, winds
northerly moderate, and seas
calm.

Amman12/22
Aqaba19/30
Deserts11/25
Jordan Valley18/29
Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 21, Aqaba 29
Humidity readings: Amman
40 per cent, Aqaba 41 per
cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Bahjat Bader5332642
Firas pharmacy5661912
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy4637055
Nalroukh pharmacy4637672
Al Salam pharmacy4636730
Yacoub pharmacy4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy4637660
Najid pharmacy5347632
IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Tareq Hijawi985445
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111
Civil Defence Department5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Res-
cue4630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade4617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Dept.4630321

Hotel Complaints5605800
Price Complaints5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Com-
plaints787111
Telephone Information (directo-
ry assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority5680100
J. Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Co.4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special
Surgery 5921199
The Islamic Abdi5666131/7
Hussien Medical Centre Tel.
5336813, 58547632
Luzmila4630195
Khalidi Maternity4642811/5
Akileh Maternity4642362
Malhas, J. Amman4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5669131
University Hospital5353444
Al-Munasher Hospital 5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 771011/3
Al-Bashir7751112/6
Army, Marka8916111/5
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50

Amal Hospital5674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital
(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital
(09)900560
Ibo Sina Hospital(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital
(09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital
(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital
(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital
(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital
(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) informa-
tion department at the Queen
Alia International Airport Tel.
(44)53200 where it should
always be verified.
Information on other flights are
supplied on phone 44 (52700) or
44 (53290).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:45Sanaa (RJ)
09:45New Delhi (RJ)

10:05Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
10:15Bombay (RJ)
10:25Beirut (RJ)
10:40Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:50Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
11:25Colombo (RJ)
15:35 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:05Moscow (RJ)
17:30London (RJ)
18:45Kuwait (RJ)
19:10Athens (RJ)
20:05Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
20:45 Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
23:55Larnaca (RJ)
04:50New Delhi (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

13:00Riyadh (SV)
14:10 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:10Sharjah (AH)
15:40Doha (QR)
16:00Dubai (EK)
19:00Paris (AF)
20:25Tel Aviv (LY)
21:10London (BA)
21:10Beirut (ME)
21:40Cairo (MS)
23:20Istanbul (TK)
23:35Larnaca (CY)
01:15Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
03:00Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW)

(For Thursday and Friday)
10:20 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA
and proceeding to Marka Air-
port) (RW)
20:20Tel Aviv (arriving at
QAIA on Friday only) (RW)
22:35 Tel Aviv (arriving at

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:45Beirut (RJ)
07:20Moscow (RJ)
12:15Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:20Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:30Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
12:45Kuwait (RJ)
13:00Paris (RJ)
13:20London (RJ)
13:20Athens (RJ)
16:15New Delhi (add) (RJ)
20:35Larnaca (RJ)
21:10Cairo (RJ)
21:20Jeddah (RJ)
00:30 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights

06:15Istanbul (TK)
07:00Frankfurt (LH)
08:20London (BA)
08:45Beirut (ME)
14:30Riyadh (SV)
15:00Abu Dhabi (GF)
16:00Annabab, Algiers (AH)
16:30Doha (QR)
17:00Damascus, Dubai (EK)
21:10Tel Aviv (LY)
22:40Cairo (MS)
02:15Amsterdam (KL)
04:00Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings

(For Thursday and Friday)
08:00 Aqaba (from Marka Air-
port) (RW)
20:45 Tel Aviv (from QAIA —
on Thursday only) (RW)
21:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Home News

Jordan Times, Thursday-Friday, May 14-15, 1998 3

Queen honours participants in charitable campaign

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor on Wednesday attended the annual ceremony honouring students participating in the Charitable Piaster Fund (Al Qirsh Al Kheir) at the University of Jordan, according to a press release.

Queen Noor, who has patronised the fund since its establishment, distributed honorary certificates and commemorative cups to students, school principals and members of the Ministry of Education, commending them on their efforts to enable underprivileged students to continue their education at schools and universities in Jordan, the statement said.

In his speech, the president of the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), Abdullah Khanib, said the fund has raised "over JD1.5 million since its inception for outstanding and needy students."

The president of the CPF Committee, Sheikh Izzedin Al Khanib Al Tamimi, noted that 1,100 university graduates have benefited from the fund.

The annual Charitable Piaster Fund (CPF), founded by GUVS in 1985, assists outstanding needy students in completing their education by providing them with annual loans and donations. CPF coined its name to emphasise that donations as meagre as one piaster are accepted, thus enabling all members of society to contribute to the fund. It has installed charity boxes in schools, to which students may donate throughout the year, according to the statement.

Queen Noor was received by Minister of Social Development Mohammad Kheir Mamsar, Minister of Education Mohammad Harman and members of the GUVS Executive Council.

Marking 50th anniversary of nakbeh Lower House issues statement of 'absolute' support for Palestinian people's rights

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament on Wednesday called for the implementation of U.N. Resolutions 242, 338 and 425 concerning the occupied Arab territories in Palestine, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon and voiced absolute support for the Palestinian people's struggle for their legitimate rights.

In a statement issued on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the occupation of Palestine, Parliament said it "reiterates its call for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with U.N. resolutions and demands Israel's complete withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories."

"The Lower House reaffirms its full backing of the Palestinian National Authority in its ongoing endeavours to realise the rights of the Palestinian people and establish a Palestinian state on Palestinian national soil," said the statement.

The House voiced its rejection of the expansion of Jewish settlements and attempts to change the Arab and Islamic character of Jerusalem. It also demanded the release of all Arab prisoners in Israeli jails.

Parliament called on the U.S., the sponsor of the peace process, to shoulder its responsibilities in achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region and to refrain from backing Israel's policies, which contravene all international principles and laws.

It also called for a just solution to the Palestinian refugee question within the framework of the principle of international legitimacy and for guaranteeing their rights to return and compensation.

The statement urged Arab states to work toward solidarity and act collectively to achieve the Arab Nation's goals.

The Lower House paid tribute to the martyrs of the nation who fell in the course of defending Palestine. Parliament praised the efforts of His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan in supporting the Palestinian people's efforts to regain their rights on their national soil and in backing the Arab Nation's efforts to secure the liberation of the Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanese territory.

Jordan lodges complaint with Israel over pollution in Aqaba-Eilat region

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan on Wednesday protested to Israel over pollution caused by untreated sewage that found its way into the Gulf of Aqaba from a wastewater treatment plant in the nearby Israeli city of Eilat.

Duraid Mahasneh, secretary general of the Jordan Valley Authority, told the Jordan Times that he sent a letter to Nehama Ronen, secretary general of the Israeli Environment Ministry, "asking her to collaborate with the mayor of Eilat to stop the pollution."

Israeli radio on Tuesday warned Eilat beach-goers from swimming in the sea because of pollution caused by untreated waste dumped by the Eilat sewage treatment plant, which was working beyond its capacity.

Jordanian officials say that Israel has for years claimed that the problems associated with the Eilat plant have been solved.

Jordan blames occasional bad smells that cloud the area surrounding the twin Red Sea port cities of Eilat and Aqaba and the swarms of mosquitoes and flies pestering Aqaba residents and tourists on the Israeli sewage treatment plant.

Israel, in turn, has claimed that Aqaba's sewage treatment plant is the source of the bad smell, a charge denied by Jordanian officials.

"Based on Tuesday's radio warning, which acknowledged the problem of untreated waste entering the sea, I asked Ms. Ronen in the letter to take measures to finally solve the problems caused by the Eilat plant," Dr. Mahasneh told the Jordan Times.

"They [Israelis] claim they have solved the problem, but what happened proves they did not," he added.

He said teams on Wednesday began an environmentally-friendly pesticide spraying campaign to rid the Aqaba area of mosquitoes and flies plaguing the sea resort.

The decision to combat the insects was taken at a meeting in Aqaba on Sunday between Dr. Mahasneh and Ms. Ronen.

It was agreed at the meeting to launch a long-term action plan to control pollution caused by the Eilat plant and to monitor it.

Specialists from both countries have been meeting in line with the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, which has a chapter on environmental cooperation.

Another committee is also focusing on finding a solution for flies bothering residents of the Dead Sea area and various parts of the Jordan Valley, especially during summer.



PRINCESS RANIA ANNOUNCES NEW CENTRE: HRH Princess Rania, president of the Jordan River for Development Projects, Wednesday announces the establishment of the child protection unit, which is affiliated to Dar Al Aman Rehabilitation and Protection Centre. Speaking during a meeting at the Royal Court, Princess Rania stressed the need for devising a strategy to prevent child abuse. Attending the meeting were Minister of Social Development Mohammad Kheir Mamsar, Public Security Department Director General Nasouh Muhieddin as well as other officials and a UNICEF representative (Petra photo)

Srou, parliamentary delegation begin official visit to Algeria

AMMAN (Petra) — The speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, Sa'd Hayel Srou, today heads a parliamentary delegation to Algeria on an official visit at the invitation of his counterpart Abdul Qader Ben Saleh, speaker of the Algerian National Council.

During the visit, Mr. Srou will meet with President Liamine Zeroul, government leaders and parliament members.

Mr. Srou and the six-member delegation will hold comprehensive talks on Jordanian-Algerian relations, with a special focus on parliamentary cooperation, political developments and collective Arab action to defuse conflicts and harmonise the views of Arab countries.

In a statement on the eve of his visit, Mr. Srou said Jordan is seeking to work closely with Algeria to serve the interests of the Algerian and Jordanian peoples.

He paid tribute to the Algerian parliamentarians for their ongoing efforts to bolster the Arab Parliamentary Union's principles and enhance inter-Arab cooperation.

Accompanying Mr. Srou are deputies Nawaf Khawaldeh, Mohammad Thweib, Saleh Sha'waz, Ahmad Ajameh, Saleh Jbour and Ahmad Khatib.

UNRWA staff to mark nakbeh with short work stoppage

By Ghafar Alud
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The personnel of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) will on Thursday commemorate the 50th anniversary of the "nakba" (catastrophe) marking the creation of Israel. Hussein Ya'qoub, chairman of the Inter-staff Union Conference at the agency's headquarters said Wednesday.

"Work will be suspended from 1:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m. on Thursday to commemorate the nakba of the creation of Israel and to protest the Israeli government's intransigent policies stalling the peace process," Dr. Ya'qoub told the Jordan Times.

He said the 250 people working at the agency's headquarters will today gather in front of the conference room to remember the nakba and express their support for the Palestinian people. But, he added, no special activities were planned for the occasion.

According to a staff representative who requested anonymity, all 2,400 UNRWA workers in Jordan are also expected to stop working for one hour to mark 50 years of nakba.

"These include UNRWA teachers, students, nurses and doctors," he said.

UNRWA was set up after the war that led to Israel's creation in 1948 to offer educational help, relief and social services to millions of Palestinian refugees who fled to neighbouring states. Jordan alone is home to over 1.2 million U.N.-registered refugees.

Throughout the past three years, UNRWA has been complaining of the lack of adequate funds, forcing it to reduce some of the services it provides to Palestinian refugees.

The cash-strapped agency still faces the difficult task of enlarging its donor base and increasing its donor contributions to prevent any further budget deficits and service cuts.

UNRWA Secretary General Peter Hansen earlier said the \$156 million the agency received in December's pledging conference covered only half of its 1998 budget of \$314 million approved by the United Nations.

A meeting of UNRWA's major donors and host governments will take place in Amman this month to discuss the agency's programmes and financial situation.

UNRWA employees in its five areas of operation — Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip — have long been demanding better working conditions, salary increases, early retirement and compensation for termination of employment.

The agency employees hope the annual staff meeting, to take place in Amman on June 24-25, will yield positive results and spur UNRWA to heed their demands.

Life sentence for convicted murderer after retrial

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A 42-year-old man on death row being retried for a 1994 double murder was sentenced Wednesday to life in prison with hard labour after the Criminal Court found him guilty of manslaughter.

Muhammad Yousef was originally sentenced to death by the Criminal Court on Feb. 17, 1997, after he was found guilty of the premeditated shooting murders of Salma Nader Abu Izzi, 34, and his brother Nader, 22, in their shop in the Wadi Sagra neighbourhood of Amman on Oct. 11, 1994.

However, on May 31, 1997, the Court of Cassation returned the case to the Criminal Court asking for a retrial because "the court did not take into consideration a medical report which indicated that the defendant had been subjected to a physical assault on the day of the murder."

"After recalling several witnesses and examining the medical report, we decided to amend the premeditated murder charge to manslaughter, because it was proven to us that Mr. Yousef did not plot to kill the two brothers," presiding Judge Mohammad Ajameh said.

Judge Ajameh said the medical report indicated that Mr. Yousef had been subjected to a physical assault leaving him with a bloody nose and evidence of violence on his face.

Further, the witnesses who were recalled to testify stated that Salma attacked Mr. Yousef shortly after the defendant entered their shop. Their testimonies contradicted the testimony of the sole shooting spree survivor, Fathi Saleh, who stated last year that Mr. Yousef entered the store and without saying a word pulled his gun and started shooting at them.

According to court documents, Mr. Yousef frequently argued with the victims regarding problems related to the proximity of their shops. They subsequently filed cases against each other in court.

"Due to the dispute, the two victims began to avoid Mr. Yousef to prevent trouble," the court said.

On the day of the incident, transcripts said, the defendant consumed alcohol at around 2:00 p.m., grabbed his unlicensed gun and went to their shop.

According to witnesses, Salma was standing with an employee at the office named Fathi Saleh, while his brother Nader asked Mr. Yousef if he needed anything.

Mr. Yousef asked if they had any Scotch tape for sale. The victim said no and asked him to leave, it added.

"Salma then pulled the defendant toward him and punched him in the nose. Mr. Yousef responded by pulling his gun and shooting once at the three," the court said.

They all ran toward a table and ducked underneath to hide from the onslaught, "but Mr. Yousef walked toward them and opened fire again... until he emptied his pistol, then left the store," the court maintained.

The new verdict will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

What's Going On

- FILMS**
- * Spanish film "Bodas de sangre" (in Spanish) at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.
 - * "I Paint What I See" — on the life of Mexican Artist Diego Rivera at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.
 - * "Bed of Roses" at the American Center, Abdoun on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.
- ART SALE**
- * Sale of personal oil paintings of artist Mohammad Al Hadidi (at his residence), Dahiya Al Rashid, near Al Dawahi Hotel (Tel. 5154567).
- CONCERTS**
- * Concert by Rula Talhoumi at the Royal Cultural Centre on Saturday, May 16, at 8:00 p.m. (daily until May 21).
 - * Concert by "Zebda" band at the amphitheatre of King Abdullah Gardens on Saturday, May 16, at 6:30 p.m. (Also making another performance at Yarmouk University, Irbid on Sunday, May 17, at 3:30 p.m.)
- THE FIRST UNIVERSITIES THEATRE FESTIVAL**
- * Jerash University play "A Husband in a Mess" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 7:00 p.m.
 - * Amman University play "What Where?" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre on Friday, at 7:00 p.m.
 - * Yarmouk University play "The Teacher" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre on Saturday, May 16, at 7:00 p.m.
- EXHIBITIONS**
- * Spring collection of ceramic items and rugs at Beit Al Bawadi showroom, Abdoun (Tel. 5925841/5930070), until May 24.
 - * Exhibition of hand-made jewellery by Samia Mango at the Khazna Gallery, near the InterContinental Hotel, Jabal Amman, (Tel. 4640725) until May 14.
 - * Photo exhibition "Frederico Garcia Lorca" and book exhibition "Lorca Translated Into Arabic" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman (Tel. 4610858), until May 25.
 - * "Sculpture Designs" by Jewellery Designer Suzanne El Masry and Sculptor Samer Tabba at the American Center, Abdoun until May 25.
 - * Paintings by Lebanese-American artist Etel Adnan entitled "Artist's Book of Art and Poetry" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until May 28. Also displaying works by Beirut-based Syrian artist Marwan Bashi entitled "A Suite of Heads," and works by contemporary Arab artists.

Conference to examine role of Arab oil in 21st century

AMMAN (Petra) — The Institute of Diplomacy (ID) will open a two-day conference on "oil and diplomacy: towards the 21st century" on May 18 under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, according to ID board chairperson Kamel Abu Jaber.

The meeting coincides with the widely-held belief in the Arab World that Arab oil has not been accorded the importance it deserves, Dr. Abu Jaber said.

"In the Arab point of view, Arab oil assumes a vital role in view of the latest world events, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, which have caused major changes in the region's strategic balance," according to Dr. Abu Jaber.

The conference, he said, will deal with the following topics: Arab oil from a world perspective, oil and regional development, the international community and sanctions, new perspectives on oil culture and the effects of oil on Arab culture and on the environment.

The coming conference will attempt to ascertain the role of oil as a unifying factor in the coming century: towards the 21st century.

Dr. Abu Jaber said the discussions and the research papers at the conference will also contribute to enriching academic activities.

Delegates to the conference include Sheikh Ahmad Zaki Yamani, former Saudi Arabian oil minister, Ali Atiq, secretary general of the Arab Thought Forum, and Mohammad Saleh Horani, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources.

The most recent of the ID's series of conferences, which began in 1994, was held in 1996 under the theme "diplomatic contacts: new horizons in the age of informatics."

Planned shopping festival in Sweifiyeh aims at reviving economy

By Sandra Zeiger
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Sweifiyeh's over 600 merchants, taking the cue from their counterparts in Dubai and Beirut, are busy preparing for Amman's first-ever shopping festival.

Organisers said the June 29-July 3 fair is meant to revive the Kingdom's recession-hit economy and lure more tourists to visit Jordan, especially Arab Gulf nationals escaping soaring summer temperatures in their countries.

Two shopping festivals famous in the Arab World have inspired organisers: a three-week extravaganza of buying, leisure and culture held in the UAE emirate of Dubai in March and a similar month-long event held in Beirut every February.

Faris Kawar, head of the festival committee, said the sprawling commercial area of Sweifiyeh was chosen "due to its convenience for pedestrians and its high concentration and variety of shops and restaurants."

Organisers hope the festival, expected to attract over 20,000 visitors, would become an annual event that will eventually include all of Amman.

Mr. Kawar, owner of the Bride and Groom Centre in Sweifiyeh, said over 600 shops, all located on the first floor of their buildings, have been asked to participate in the festival.

But it remains unclear how many will actually take part as there is an entrance fee of JD75.

Several shopkeepers, discouraged by the relatively low purchasing of the country's consumers, remain sceptical.

"People may come just to look, but not to buy," said one trader.

To counter this concern, organisers will use shopping incentive techniques, including hefty discounts of between 10 and 50 per cent and top lottery prizes, including a duty-free car at a special drawing marking the end of the festival.

As in Dubai, shoppers, depending on the amount of money they spend at a participating shop, will receive coupons enabling them to win daily prizes — clothes, houseware, electronics, restaurant meals, hotel stays and airline tickets.

The Sweifiyeh commercial area will be closed off to vehicles throughout the event between Al Ameerah Taghreed Street, Abdul Rahim Al Haj Mohammad Street, Tareq Al Jindi Street and Salah Suheimat Street.

Celebrations will be held every night with music for adults and children. Special theatres will be set up for these free activities along with a mini-circus, fireworks and laser shows between 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

The volume of retail business across the Kingdom has declined over the last few years, according to traders and shopkeepers, and for many, the last ten years have been extremely bad.

Jeweller Faiyk Beirakdar, who has been in business in Amman for over 30 years, told the Jordan Times that "compared to the old days, we are not working at all."

Merchant Osama Haddad, whose family has been doing business in Amman for over 50 years, said competition from non-professional shopkeepers was hurting everyone.

He complained that he and other long-time merchants have been forced to sell products at or below cost in order to compete with new merchants who are slashing the prices of their goods out of ignorance of the basics of the business.

Mr. Haddad is doubtful about the success of the shopping festival, saying that he was already giving large discounts to customers just to encourage them to buy.

Festival organisers hope to combat widespread recession by spurring a 60 per cent increase in sales.

"The actual increase in sales will depend on the individual shopkeepers and how they advertise and promote their business," Mr. Kawar told the Jordan Times.

Organisers also hope the festival will encourage shopkeepers to be more active in promoting their outlets and the Sweifiyeh shopping district throughout the year.

Despite their scepticism, all merchants said the timing of the festival was perfect as tourists and visitors from the Gulf normally buy from them during the summer season.

The festival will kick off on the last day of the tawjibi (government high school) exams and end a day before the annual Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts, which has become a magnet for thousands of Arab visitors.

Clinton readies sanctions against India

BERLIN (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton Wednesday signed official papers allowing the United States to slap sanctions on India for carrying out nuclear tests, a U.S. official said.

The official, who asked not to be named, said that Mr. Clinton had finally decided on the sanctions overnight Tuesday as he flew to Berlin to start a two-day visit marking the 50th anniversary of the Berlin airlift.

He is also to make a major policy speech on U.S.-Europe relations.

Mr. Clinton was likely to announce the sanctions later in the day after meeting German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Potsdam.

India carried out three nuclear tests Monday unleashing a torrent of criticism from abroad and followed up by announcing two more tests Wednesday to complete the series.

Mr. Clinton had vowed to impose tough sanctions on India before leaving for his trip to Europe.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said late Tuesday after briefing members of Congress that she was "appalled" by India's action and said Washington must impose sanctions "immediately."

"We are going to be carrying out the law, which is a stringent law," she said, adding "The law needs to be carried out immediately."

The 1994 U.S. law requires that Washington freeze all but humanitarian aid to India because of the tests and oppose any loans

to New Delhi from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

U.S. banks will not be allowed to grant any loans to New Delhi. The law, which has never been invoked, provides for a delay of 30 days before being implemented, which means it would theoretically come into force on June 13.

Mr. Clinton was at 1730 GMT to speak at the Schauspielhaus theatre in Berlin to deliver a speech that U.S. Ambassador John Kornblum said would be an "important" look at the future of U.S.-Europe relations.

In Washington, National Security Advisor Sandy Berger said that Mr. Clinton, four years after his first visit to Berlin, wanted to outline the next steps towards a peaceful, democratic Europe.

Mr. Kohl and Mr. Clinton are to discuss NATO enlargement, the situation in the Serbian province of Kosovo and in Bosnia. European integration and the upcoming G8 summit at the weekend in Birmingham, England.

In a speech he is to make Thursday at the town of Eisenach in the former East Germany, Mr. Clinton is expected to call for tolerance in the wake of an extreme-right political resurgence and to stress the importance of aid to a region with unemployment of over 20 per cent.

In Eisenach, where he will be making the first official visit by a U.S. president to the former Communist

half of Germany, he will see a General Motors-owned Opel auto factory. The United States is the biggest foreign investor in the former East Germany and Mr. Clinton wants to stress this, Mr. Kornblum said.

Mr. Clinton was to have dinner Wednesday evening with German President Roman Herzog and also meet Social-Democratic opposition leader Gerhard Schröder who according to opinion polls, has a good chance of replacing Mr. Kohl after legislative elections due in September.

Mr. Clinton is visiting to commemorate the Berlin airlift that defined the cold war in a Germany that has since reunited and become a key advocate of European integration.

He will attend ceremonies Thursday at Tempelhof airport that was the staging area in Berlin for the 11-month airlift from June 1948 to May 1949.

Mr. Clinton's visit is expected to be a shot in the arm for Mr. Kohl who is lagging in the polls ahead of September general elections and who will be happy for any public relations boost he can get, the Munich newspaper Abendzeitung said Tuesday.

Mr. Kohl, who prides himself on having overseen German reunification in 1990, is facing the toughest fight in his 16-year run as government chief.

This is because record unemployment has led many Germans, among them Mr. Schröder, to challenge Mr. Kohl as out of touch with the current era of a global economy.



Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (second right) chairs a meeting of the cabinet's defence committee in Islamabad. The Pakistani government and military aides met Wednesday to consider a response to nuclear tests by arch-foe India amid a clamour of calls for Islamabad to match New Delhi's nuclear gesture. Pakistan's nuclear scientist Dr. A. Q. Kahn (left), an unidentified official (second left), Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan (third left) look on (Reuters photo)

Pakistan leaders mull strategy over Indian N-tests

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Top political and military chiefs met Wednesday to decide whether Pakistan should stage its own nuclear tests following India's three — or try to seize the moral high ground amid worldwide condemnation of its arch-rival.

Major newspapers advised careful study of all options. They highlighted the global criticism of India and the U.S. decision to impose sanctions, along with Washington's strong signals to Pakistan not to follow suit.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif chaired the Defence Committee of the cabinet following hectic consultations with key aides and experts, including Pakistan's leading nuclear scientist.

The meeting was attended by top ministers, senior defence and foreign ministry officials and the military top brass among others. No details of its deliberations were immediately available.

Official sources said scientist Abdul Qader Khan, the brains behind Pakistan's nuclear programme, met Tuesday with Mr. Sharif as he returned from an economic summit in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Khan said that following the Indian tests Monday Pakistan had the ability to respond the same way once a political decision was taken.

Pakistani leaders have pledged "all appropriate" measures, without being influenced by any foreign pressure. Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan said

Tuesday the country would make a "matching" response.

But Islamabad's ambassador to the United States, Riaz Khokhar, said in Washington Pakistan would make a "mature response."

Commentators said Pakistan should take into account the worldwide protest against India and President Bill Clinton's warnings against any similar action by Islamabad.

The News daily said in an editorial it was important for Pakistan to weigh options "carefully and not react in a knee-jerk way." Islamabad should "seek to maximise diplomatic advantages, inherent in the new situation, while taking necessary steps to safeguard its national security," the paper added.

A senior U.S. arms control official warned that a nuclear arms race would cost Islamabad more than New Delhi.

John Holm, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, said the United States was looking to China, which helped Pakistan's nuclear programme, to restrain Islamabad.

"Pakistan is a much smaller country with a much smaller economic base," Mr. Holm said. "Crossing the threshold at this stage would likely lead to a direction of a competition that neither could win but that would cost Pakistan proportionately more."

"So the better advice to Pakistan would be to take the high road, to try to stop this cycle rather than to perpetuate it."

The Nation daily said the pressure on Pakistan from within to match Indian tests, and from without not to follow India's example, "is going to be tremendous."

"Pakistan should do what its security requirements dictate and weigh all its options," it said, warning that India may have decided to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) now in a bid to divert international pressure from itself to Pakistan.

"Pakistan may have very little time to decide whether it too should lay on the table its nuclear cards ... or wait and see what the international community does to India to blunt its nuclear edge," it added.

Dawn newspaper said Pakistan "must carefully calculate where the balance of advantages lies" — in coming out with a precipitate or very early response... or in waiting for a while to see whether world powers combine to offer an adequate response to the grave new challenge.

The Frontier Post advised: "If Pakistan matches the Indian challenge, then it will have to forget about ever ameliorating the lot of its poor people."

Pakistan must consider all options carefully before it goes ahead with a definitive response. "It should take care not to invite the American ire."

The press castigated the U.S. and international community as a whole for having ignored Pakistan's warnings about Indian ambitions since it exploded a device in 1974.

Defiant India conducts two more nuclear tests, says series over

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A defiant India said it conducted two more underground nuclear tests Wednesday, two days after outraging the world with three tests.

A government statement said Wednesday's tests "completed the planned series" which began in the desert range of Pokhran in Rajasthan state Monday.

A foreign ministry official said the tests involved "two sub-kilotonne" explosions at 12:21 p.m. (0651 GMT) and were "in continuation of the planned programme of underground nuclear tests begun on May 11."

"The tests have been carried out to generate additional data for improved computer simulation of designs and for attaining the capability to carry out sub-critical experiments if considered necessary."

"The tests were fully contained with no release of radioactivity into the atmosphere," it said.

The statement reiterated that India could reconsider its opposition to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). It has so far refused to sign, arguing that the pact lacks a timeframe for disarmament and fails to stop computer-simulated tests.

India made a similar hint Monday after the three

underground tests, the first since 1974, were announced by Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The statement said: "The government of India reiterates the offer to consider adhering to some of the undertakings in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in the framework of the proposal in its statement of May 11."

Monday's three underground nuclear tests invited worldwide condemnation and tough sanctions from the United States and Japan.

Shares plunged four per cent at close of trade on the Bombay Stock Exchange following news of the two more nuclear tests and the decision of the U.S. and Japan to impose sanctions. The magnitude of Monday's tests could represent 55 kilotonnes of TNT, more than twice the size of the bomb that devastated Hiroshima in Japan, an Indian seismology agency announced.

The state-owned Bhabha Atomic Research Centre said the impact of Monday 1015 GMT tests was measured by its Gaubidanur Seismic Array Station.

The American A-bomb which destroyed the Japanese city at the end of World War II represented 20 kilotonnes.

Australia tightens its borders after influx of illegals

CANBERRA (AFP) — Australia will pump millions of dollars into tightening its borders after a massive surge in people trying to gain illegal entry, Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said Wednesday.

A \$50 visa fee will be introduced for entrants from high risk countries, such as Pakistan, Lebanon and Cambodia.

Tourism groups described the move as "hostile." "The fact is that some of the countries the government has decided to impose the charge on — China, India and Taiwan — are also some of our most promising tourist markets," said Len Taylor, managing director of the Inbound Tourism Organisation of Australia.

"This move will put their growth potential at risk." Figures released in budget documents show the number of unauthorised arrivals by air jumped 127 per cent in the last three years.

Just 663 people attempted to enter the country by air illegally in 1995. That soared to 1,350 in 1996-97 and already stands at 1,190 in the first four months of this year. Some of the increase can be attributed to Asians fleeing economic problems in the region and there is concern that numbers could rocket during the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Mr. Ruddock said.

"We are seeing an increase in illegal movements around the world," he told AFP. "People smuggling is big business and Australia needs to be alert to what is happening."

The illegals took to the air after tougher coastal surveillance virtually halted the trade in illegal boat people. While other spending measures were cut to the bone in this year's budget, which moved into surplus for the first time in almost a decade, funding for immigration soared.

Mr. Ruddock said 19.4 million dollars (\$13 million) will be used for more rigorous screening measures. Coastal surveillance will be further tightened and stricter entry procedures introduced for some travellers.

Australia currently has 70,000 "undesirables" on its immigration computer database. More than 20,000 aliases are listed.

Extra immigration staff, meanwhile, will be posted overseas "to put migration decision-making in the hands of foreigners was short-sighted," Mr. Ruddock said.

In other measures, the government said it would retain its non-humanitarian migration intake for the coming financial year at 68,000.

The focus will again be on skilled entrants while parent migration will be increased. Other initiatives include extra powers for Mr. Ruddock to refuse potential migrants on character grounds. Anyone who has served more than 12 months in jail will be automatically refused entry.

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In related immigration figures, Indonesia was shown to be the top source country for people seeking refugee status in Australia, outpacing those from China.

Between July last year and March 809 Indonesians, many ethnic Chinese, sought refugee status in New South Wales state.

"distressing and extremely difficult to sentence one so young for any offence of violence, but more so ... for the crime of murder."

She took into account the boy's mild intellectual impairment, consumption of alcohol on the night of the killing and his age.

"Were it not for his extreme youth and intellectual impairment, the sentence imposed would naturally be substantially greater," Ms. Simpson said.

Soriano, then 18, assaulted Whalley before the 13-year-old produced a knife and stabbed him.

"Mr. Whalley was a law-abiding member of the community — he did nothing whatsoever to provoke this vicious, cowardly attack," the judge said.

Students riot in Senegal capital

DAKAR (R) — Campus turmoil spread in Senegal Tuesday with rampaging students burning government cars and attacking a cabinet minister's home in the capital Dakar, police and witnesses said.

Authorities said nine youths were arrested in Dakar, one of two cities where violence flared Tuesday as students took to the streets to protest police handling of earlier unrest.

Witnesses said demonstrators ransacked the home of Information Minister Serigne Diop, who was out campaigning for parliamentary elections scheduled for May 24.

The unrest does not appear

to be linked to the polls. "They entered the house, smashed five cars which were in the yard and some windows," a witness told Reuters.

Students earlier attacked cars in central Dakar, disrupted traffic and scattered garbage in many streets, forcing some shops to close briefly, witnesses said.

Police fired teargas to disperse others who smashed windows at the Dakar offices of state radio and television.

In the central town of Kaolack, high school students clashed with police during a similar demonstration. There were no reports of injuries in either town.

The students said they were acting in solidarity with colleagues at Saint Louis, Senegal's second city 250 km north of the capital.

Witnesses said nine Saint Louis students were wounded when paramilitary gendarmes opened fire during campus violence there on May 5. Authorities said police used only teargas to disperse the students, who burned 10 cars, including the rector's.

Repeated power cuts on the Saint Louis campus triggered the original trouble, university authorities said.

Monday students ransacked the rector's offices after he closed the college until May 16.

Australian teen gets seven years for murder

SYDNEY (AFP) — One of Australia's youngest convicted killers was sentenced Wednesday to a minimum seven years in a juvenile detention centre for the "vicious and cowardly murder" of a British tourist.

The 15-year-old boy — who was 13 at the time of the killing — had pleaded guilty in the New South Wales Supreme Court to the murder of Gawn Whalley, 23, who was in Australia on a working holiday.

He was stabbed several times with a butterfly knife on April 2, 1996, and left to die on a suburban Sydney footpath.

A co-accused, Richard Soriano, now 20, pleaded guilty to Whalley's manslaughter.

Justice Carolyn Simpson said the death was an example of "the dreadful consequences that can flow from the decision to carry a knife."

properly taking an increasingly serious view of the use of knives as weapons," she said.

"In doing so, they are doing no more than reflecting the community's concern at what appears to be an escalation in this kind of crime."

On the day of the murder Soriano, the boy and other youths were driving in the Sydney suburb of Marvill when they saw Whalley and decided they would "roll, or rob" him. Ms. Simpson said,

"distressing and extremely difficult to sentence one so young for any offence of violence, but more so ... for the crime of murder."

She took into account the boy's mild intellectual impairment, consumption of alcohol on the night of the killing and his age.

"Were it not for his extreme youth and intellectual impairment, the sentence imposed would naturally be substantially greater," Ms. Simpson said.

Windows 98 back on track for release, but Microsoft still challenged

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — An appeals court has sided with Microsoft Corp. finding that anti-trust restrictions placed on the sale of its Windows personal computer operating system do not apply to the imminent release of the new Windows 98 version, the company said.

The global software giant can now ship Windows 98 this week and require computer makers to include Microsoft's Internet browser.

However, more legal challenges to Windows 98 remain: The U.S. Justice Department is reportedly preparing an anti-trust attack on the operating system and possibly other Microsoft products and practices.

The challenge is expected to be filed Thursday, along with coordinated legal filings in up to 12 states.

Government regulators could then seek an immediate court ruling that stops the shipment of Windows 98.

Also Tuesday, Microsoft rival Sun Microsystems asked a federal court to force the software giant to include an approved version of Sun's popular Java programming language.

It is unclear how long it will take for a judge to rule on the Sun Microsystems challenge.

Commenting on the favourable ruling Tuesday, Microsoft spokesman William Neukom described it as "good news for consumers."

"We don't believe there is any legal basis for blocking or delaying Windows 98," Mr. Neukom said.

The Los Angeles panel unanimously ruled in favour of Microsoft, finding that whatever

the chances are for the U.S. government to get a permanent injunction against Microsoft, they appear "very weak with respect to Windows 98."

To do otherwise, the three-judge panel said, would "put judges and juries in the unenviable position of designing computers," Microsoft noted in a prepared statement.

The current legal challenge to Microsoft dates back to December 1997, when U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson issued a preliminary injunction barring the company from bundling its web browser with its Windows 95 operating system or successor versions.

Microsoft appealed the decision, arguing that the injunction should not apply to Windows 98.

If the court had ruled against Microsoft, the software manufacturer would probably have had to keep Windows 98 off the market, or risk being found in contempt of court.

Microsoft is scheduled to begin shipping the software packages to computer makers Friday, with the software available in new computers for sale beginning June 25.

Both software rivals and the U.S. Justice Department believe that Microsoft has an undue advantage in pushing Microsoft Explorer, its Internet browser, because of the almost universal use of its Windows operating system in computers around the world.

The version 4.0 of the Explorer browser comes integrated in the Windows 98 package, thus decreasing chances that consumers will use rival products such as the Netscape company's Internet browser.

Hillary Clinton hones in on feminism in French visit

PARIS (AFP) — U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton honed in on one of her pet themes, feminism, on the second day of a visit to France Wednesday as the guest of counterpart, Bernadette Chirac.

After a day spent in rural France brushing shoulders with grassroots politicians and ordinary people, the Paris leg of Hillary Clinton's two-day visit focused on meetings with prominent women as well as high-level lunches and talks with French leaders.

Her day began over coffee with the philosopher wife of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, better known as Sylviane Agacinski, a well-known academic who has just published a book on the history of feminism.

Mrs. Clinton, in bright turquoise, then swept into the grounds of the French Senate by the leafy Luxembourg gardens in a long black limousine to be met by her host, the only French president's wife to be elected to public office.

Mrs. Clinton then sat down for a closed-door round-table discussion with 15 women in senior positions on the emergence of women in professional and public life.

"I hope to learn more about France and about what we have in common," she said.

Mrs. Chirac, who the previous day introduced the U.S. first lady to grassroots politics on a whirlwind visit to the heart of rural France, said: "We are going to talk about ourselves, our struggles, our challenges, our aspirations."

Mrs. Chirac is a member of the departmental council and municipal council of the central region of Corrèze.

Later Wednesday, Mrs. Clinton was due to have lunch at the Elysée palace with the presidential couple, launch a school Internet exchange and meet Lionel Jospin.



Armed riot police on the back of motorcycles prepare to fire during clashes with students outside Gajah Mada university in the cultural heart of Java, 800 km south-east of Jakarta. About 6,000 students took to the streets demanding political reforms and the resignation of President Suharto. Six people were reported injured during the clashes (Reuters photo)

Sierra Leoneans plan pro-British march

FREETOWN (R) — A coalition of trade unions and civic groups in Sierra Leone has called for British marches for Saturday to express support for the role of the former colonial power in the restoration of its ousted president.

Representatives of the various groups described British High Commissioner Peter Penfold, a focus of allegations of illegal British government military involvement in Sierra Leone, as a national hero at a meeting Tuesday.

"Every working person will demonstrate in every corner of Sierra Leone free of fighting... to show support for the British government and its High Commissioner... Peter Penfold for what they did in helping to free us from the yoke of the military junta," Hassan Barrie, one of the organisers, told Reuters.

Commercial activity was expected to grind to a halt. "Saturday, we will desert the markets to demonstrate. Nothing will be sold in any market in the country until after we have demonstrated," Grace Palmer, secretary general of the Market Women's Association, told a packed labour congress hall.

The British government faces opposition charges that ministers knew British security company Sandline International was supplying arms and training troops to help President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah defeat the junta which supplanted him in May 1997.

German court starts Compuserve porn case

MUNICH (R) — A German court opened proceedings Tuesday in a case that could define local responsibility for pornography available through the Internet.

After nearly three years of investigations and pre-trial hearings, the former head of the German division of Compuserve On-line service, spent his first day in court to defend himself against charges of distributing child pornography and other illegal materials.

Prosecutors alleged that Felix Somn, 34, should be held responsible because Compuserve provided access in Germany to illegal pornographic pictures and Nazi texts that were available via the Internet from computers in other countries.

Mr. Somn, who left Compuserve last year and started his own electronic commerce consulting firm, told Reuters he expected to be cleared of the charges.

"I am convinced that this court process will prove my innocence," he said in a statement. "The charges are based on a misunderstanding of the structure of the Internet and the role of service providers."

Mr. Somn, who left Compuserve last July, also said he notified German authorities

U.N. chiefs, Clinton parable open Cannes festival

CANNES, France (AFP) — The Cannes Film Festival, the premier showcase for world and independent cinema, begins its second half-century Wednesday with a classic Hollywood tale of ambition and betrayal, lust and devotion.

The European premiere of "Primary Colours", a lightly disguised account of Bill Clinton's 1991 campaign for the U.S. presidency, kicks off a two-week programme of films from 14 countries in the official selection plus offerings from countless other horizons in the parallel sections.

"Primary Colours" star Erina Thompson, who achieves a striking physical resemblance to Hillary Clinton in the film, was unable to resist a quick dip in the Mediterranean Tuesday.

She promised there would be no repetition of the scandal caused on one of her three previous visits when she ascended the steps of the Palais des Festivals wearing jeans. "This time I've remembered my evening dress," she said.

Festival jury president Martin Scorsese was also available for photographers along the Croisette ahead of the official presentation of the jury later Wednesday.

Scorsese, a Golden Palm winner in 1976 with "Taxi Driver", gave up the chance to present his latest film "Kundun", about the Dalai Lama, at Cannes in order to chair the jury. "As I get older," he told reporters. "I wonder like Alain Resnais whether what I like best is making movies or watching movies."

More than 4,000 journalists are expected to descend on the southern French resort, whose normal population of 70,000 swells to three or four times that number during the festival.

After the hoopla of last year's 50th birthday celebrations, the festival aims to turn the focus back onto films with what director Gilles Jacob promised would be a programme of "better, gentler"

movies. The comings and goings along the sea-front will as ever form part of the spectacle, however.

The lobbies of the luxury hotels will buzz with wheeling and dealing as producers, directors and agents haggle and schmooze in the hope of getting a long-cherished project off the ground.

The festival can be counted on to produce its ration of madcap stunts aimed at promoting Hollywood productions, while for many visitors the frenzied party scene will be the main attraction.

Not only the film world is hot-footing it to Cannes. Opening night, with its ritual procession of the glitziest up the steps of the festival building, will this year be notable for the presence of two U.N. secretaries general, the incumbent Kofi Annan, currently on business in France, and his predecessor Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Other film luminaries due in town include Andie MacDowell, Johnny Depp, Cameron Diaz, Charlton Heston, Irene Papas, Ewan McGregor, Janet Leigh, Harvey Keitel and Bruce Willis.

One of the most intriguing events of the festival will be the screening in the "Certain Regard" section of the first work in more than a decade by Swedish master Ingmar Bergman, whose "In the Presence of a Clown" was shot in video and blown up to 35mm.

Bergman, the last of Europe's postwar generation of great filmmakers, last year received the accolade of a special Palm of Palms award.

Attentive as ever to past glories, the festival this year devotes its retrospective season to the work of eminent producers, notably schlock horror specialist Roger Corman and Hsu Feng, the Taiwanese former actress who produced the 1993 Cannes joint Golden Palm winner, Chen Kaige's "Farewell to my Concubine."

One dead in Jakarta as violence explodes over student killings

JAKARTA (AFP) — Hundreds of rioters rampaged across Jakarta Wednesday as security forces struggled to keep order, leaving one person dead and nine wounded, when anger flared over the killing of six students, officials and witnesses said.

Violence also exploded in the city of Yogyakarta, where thousands of students who hurled Molotov cocktails at security forces who responded with water cannon and tear gas.

At rallies in Jakarta and Yogyakarta demonstrators shouted slogans against President Suharto, who has remained in Cairo for a meeting of G15 developing nations despite the turmoil engulfing his country over demands for political reform and his resignation.

The violence sent the rupiah crashing through the psychological 10,000 to the dollar barrier and shares closed 6.6 per cent lower.

The troubles in Jakarta began when security forces fired warning shots over the heads of an angry crowd of demonstrators who were

throwing stones and set light to a truck outside Trisakti University as 10,000 people gathered inside to mourn the dead students.

It spilled over into the surrounding area as mobs burned vehicles and pelted buildings with stones, blocking the main highway to Jakarta's international airport.

One man died from a head injury and his body was taken to a city hospital by the Red Cross from a police post near the university, a morgue official said.

Medical centre officials said nine people had been injured, one of them with a gunshot wound.

Helicopters could be heard buzzing overhead in parts of the city away from the main flashpoints where the rioters were either staying indoors or fleeing to the safety of neighbours.

Staff at the Central Asia Bank said the offices of a gas station had been set alight. Earlier witnesses spoke of a petrol tanker

ablaze. Some 15 cars parked outside the luxury Ciputra shopping mall were systematically attacked by mobs who grabbed any kind of stick they could use as a club and they set them alight.

Two toll-road offices on the road were also set on fire. "Now the police have blocked the toll road, so vehicles from Cengkareng airport have to turn around while those from the city to the airport have had to turn back," one witness said. The crowds were also destroying street lights and road signs as they moved east towards the predominantly Chinese Roxy business district, a staff member at the Central Asia Bank said. Troops were also lowered from three helicopters onto the roof of Trisakti University, where 2,000 students were holding a free-speech forum.

Among the mourners who gathered earlier in the university were respected opposition figures including Megawati Sukarnoputri, Muslim leader Amien Rais and the former Jakarta gov-

ernor Ali Sadikin, as well as students from different universities.

"We as a nation are in mourning," said Mr. Rais, hailing the students as "heroes" who had died in a crime against humanity. There were scenes of high emotion later at Tanah Kusir cemetery in south Jakarta where three of the six students were buried, with mourners shouting "Allahu Akbar" or God is great.

As international condemnation poured down on the government, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas denied security forces had been issued with real bullets and a police spokesman was quoted in the Jakarta Post as saying the victims were "possibly trampled to death by their fellow protesters."

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright called on the security forces and students to "break the cycle of violence which appears to be emerging." And rights group Amnesty International condemned the shootings as showing the government's "contempt for human life."

U.S. envoys arrive in Bosnia

SARAJEVO (AFP) — U.S. special envoys Richard Holbrooke and Robert Gelbard arrived in Sarajevo Wednesday for talks with country's top officials.

Mr. Holbrooke, architect of Bosnia peace agreement, and Mr. Gelbard were to meet here with members of Bosnia's collective presidency, Alija Izetbegovic, a Muslim, and Kresimir Zubak, a Croat.

During the meeting with the two envoys, Mr. Izetbegovic will raise the issue of return of refugees, his office told AFP. He will emphasise the importance of Bosnia receiving the aid pledged by the international community after the 1993-95 war as soon as possible in order to speed up the reconstruction process.

A donors' conference in Brussels earlier this month raised \$1.2 billion to rebuild Bosnia's war-shattered economy.

Later Wednesday, Mr. Holbrooke and Mr. Gelbard were due to meet with officials of the Republika Srpska, Serb-run half of Bosnia.

The two envoys held a series of talks earlier this week with the president of neighbouring Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, and Kosovo Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova on the troubled Serb province, mainly inhabited by ethnic Albanians.

Rwandan ex-PM heaps genocide blame on ruling government

PARIS (R) — Former Rwandan Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu Tuesday blamed the 1994 genocide which killed hundreds of thousands of people on a brutal power struggle, heaping much of the responsibility on the current government.

"The problem was power... there was no racial motivation," Mr. Twagiramungu told a parliamentary inquiry into French involvement in Rwanda.

An estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed by Hutu extremists in the genocide. Mr. Twagiramungu, a moderate Hutu, was named prime minister by the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) when they took power in July 1994 and was sacked by them 13 months later.

While most Western analysts see recent Rwandan history as a series of tribal conflicts, Mr. Twagiramungu said the discord at the time of the massacres was all about lust for power.

He said Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, whose plane was shot down by an unknown assassin in

April 1994, triggering the massacres, "was never accused of being the enemy of the Tutsis. They prospered under him."

"The war of liberation was never sought by the Tutsis inside Rwanda, nor by the Hutus, nor by the Tutsi refugees outside of Rwanda," he said.

Asked who stood to gain by the fatal April 6, 1994, surface-to-air missile attack on Habyarimana's plane, Mr. Twagiramungu responded: "Only the RPF had an interest."

Responsibility for the missile attack has never been determined.

Previous witnesses have variously told the special parliamentary committee that the missile used in the attack had come either from French armouries or from American stocks of Russian-made weapons, possibly via Uganda.

Both Paris and Washington have denied responsibility. The current Rwandan government refuses to allow an investigation of the missile attack, Mr. Twagiramungu said.

In hiding immediately after the genocide began, Mr. Twagiramungu said he sent a secret message to acquaintances in the

RPF leadership on April 11 urging the fighting to stop.

He said he received a hand-written reply on April 13 stating, "we will continue to fight."

Even after the slaughter of Tutsis ended and the RPF took power, "the crimes did not stop," he said. "They spread to the refugee camps of Zaire."

He estimated an additional 200,000 people — Hutus and political foes of the RPF — had died since July 1994 in this "second genocide" which he accused the world of ignoring.

"The RPF excel in public relations," he said.

Mr. Twagiramungu, who now lives in exile in Brussels, said at the time of the massacres, he backed neither the previous government nor the current one.

"I cannot say I hoped for the victory of those who were killing the people. Nor could I support the RPF, which also was killing people. I wanted the two sides to listen to each other."

"We did not go into politics to kill," he told the committee. "We never wished anyone's death."

Sri Lanka's Tiger rebel chief vows to defend land with life

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka's top Tamil rebel leader vowed his guerrillas would defend their land with their lives as the defence ministry announced seven more Tigers killed as a major offensive entered its second year Wednesday.

Velupillai Prabhakaran, the head of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), said they had set a record by tying down government forces in a northern jungle area for one year by inflicting heavy losses.

"We love this (Wanni) land more than our lives," Mr. Prabhakaran said in a statement broadcast over his clandestine Voice of Tigers radio monitored in the northern town of Vavuniya.

He warned a "river of blood" would flow and thousands of soldiers would die if the government persisted in pushing with its campaign to capture a 76-kilometre

highway in the north of the country.

The rebel chief said Tigers have been able to stall the military campaign conducted within the Wanni jungle region.

His statement came as the defence ministry said seven more Tiger guerrillas were killed by the security forces in the north of the country in four separate confrontations Tuesday.

"Troops continue to operate ahead of defences," the ministry said in a statement, adding the offensive code-named "Sure Victory" which began on May 13 last year was continuing.

Mr. Prabhakaran said they lost 1,300 cadres in the past year and claimed they killed more than 3,000 government soldiers and wounded other 7,000 since the military mounted the ongoing offensive last year.

"Our cadres enjoy very high morale," Mr. Prabhakaran said. "We have had new experiences. We have become stronger and we have captured more weapons from the army."

The figure given by Mr. Prabhakaran was less than the 1,700 the Tigers had admitted losing at a public meeting in the rebel-held area of Madhu, residents in Vavuniya said.

Security forces claim to have captured two-thirds of the A-9 highway and lost about 1,400 troops. They claim to have killed more than 3,600 Tiger guerrillas.

Meanwhile, the LTTE's London office in a statement sent here said they planned to mark the first anniversary Wednesday of the biggest military offensive against them as a "virtual defeat" of the army.

The LTTE's London office people had organised religious, cultural and political events for the anniversary in areas held by the rebels in the north of the country.

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Milestone for Palestinians, Israelis

THE ARAB World, and especially the Palestinians, mark the 50th anniversary of the "nakbe" (catastrophe), the establishment of the state of Israel on Arab land and the beginning of a Palestinian era of struggle and exile. The commemoration, May 15, of this human and political tragedy, which turned an entire people into homeless refugees, is becoming increasingly more painful as hope for a resolution fades.

The Arab-Israeli peace process, which gave rise to hopes that finally the tragedy might end, is today collapsing as a result of the intransigence and stalling by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. After the 1993 Oslo agreements, the Palestinians had hope that they would restore their national rights by the time Israel was celebrating its 50th anniversary.

But Israel, under Netanyahu, is backing out of the agreements it signed and is long overdue with its commitment to withdraw from 40 per cent of the West Bank. It makes it crystal clear every day that it has no intention of withdrawing from any parts of the West Bank that it still holds, brushing aside U.S. advice and turning down Washington's initiatives to mediate.

Not only that, Netanyahu and his coalition government seem to ignore the fact that their attitude towards the Palestinians has immediate repercussions on their relations with Jordan and Egypt and on the prospects of peace on the Arab front.

Jordan signed the 1994 peace treaty with Israel because it firmly believes in a lasting, comprehensive and just peace that will restore the Palestinians' national rights and the Syrians' and Lebanese occupied territories.

Because the Palestinian question remains the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, there surely can be no peace in the region without settling that question once and for all.

If Israel wants a real peace with the Arabs, it must first achieve a real peace with the Palestinians, by recognising their right to establish their own state on their own soil, and their right to return to their homes in Palestine.

Arabs only see in Israel's treatment of the Palestinians a confirmation of the notion that Israel wants to spread its hegemony in the region.

The current Israeli policies towards the Palestinians are threatening to throw the region once more into turmoil.

At fifty, Israel should realise that unless it resorts to a historical compromise with the Palestinians, the people who inhabit Palestine, Christian, Muslim and Jew, will all continue to suffer in the years to come.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Dustour's Ishaq Farhan Wednesday said that in light of Israel's total rejection of the idea of comprehensive peace and the return of the occupied Arab lands there is no alternative to enhancing the Islamic resistance forces in Palestine to pursue the struggle against Zionism and occupation. The writer said Netanyahu who is refusing to give back even 10 per cent of the occupied West Bank to the Arabs is assured of continued support from Britain and the U.S. and is encouraged by the two powers to defy the world community. In the writer's view, Blair's recent moves in the region were not at all meant to help peddle the European Union's ideas on peace, but rather to reassure the Israelis of Britain's continued backing. He said despite the recurrent visits of U.S. and British envoys to the region, one can see that the Israelis are more adamant than ever before, and this reassures the belief that the two powers are interfering not to see a lasting settlement but rather to encourage the Zionists to pursue their objectives. The writer said only through conflict and resistance can the Palestinians regain their rights.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Taher Adwan criticised the numerous and unnecessary visits by government ministers abroad saying that these visits are by no means matched by their opposite numbers in any other Arab or foreign country. The writer said the ministers ought to assign some time for visits to the different regions of Jordan where they can bear numerous complaints from the public. There are real social, economic, agricultural and industrial problems which ought to be given serious attention, noted the writer. He said by learning about these problems, the ministers will be in a better position to suggest solutions to the Cabinet meetings and by interacting with their countrymen, these ministers will earn more credibility for the government. Indeed, many of the complaints are not impossible to solve but it takes the ministers to visit the sites of the problems in order to be able to take the appropriate decisions, added the writer. He said Jordan is in need of officials who can focus more on internal issues and help find solutions by moving close to the heart of the problems.

View from AcademiaView from Academia

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

Mideast peace: The pressure is on

IF ONE were to think of a single word that sums up both the dilemma of Mideast peace today and the way out of the dilemma, it would most probably be "pressure." Paradoxically, significant pressure is on and at the same time required.

On the one hand, there is pressure on everyone involved in the Middle East peace process, be they peace partner, a peace patron or a peace advocate. There is pressure on the Arab countries which have signed peace agreements with Israel and are anxiously awaiting to move more speedily in the direction of peace-building. In fact, the process of peace-building, which witnessed a great momentum at one point, is almost dead now. There is pressure on Arab countries which have not yet concluded peace agreements with Israel, even though such countries are willing to engage in serious peace talks. There is also pressure on the European partners who wish to live up to the expectations of allies in the Middle East region, but whose power is curtailed by a great many considerations and inhibitions.

And there is pressure on all peace advocates in Israel itself, Palestine, the Arab World, and the globe at large who feel time is running out and who are losing to sceptics and cynics, if not to the enemies of peace.

A friend of mine who still happens to be optimistic and enthusiastic about peace was asked the other day by a friend of his who is neither optimistic nor enthusiastic: If the Israeli government is unwilling to give up in this transitional stage, for the sake of its "godmother" and "provider" America, 2-4 per cent of the land it has occupied by force, how much will it give up from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory for the sake of its Palestinian peace partners? "Wake up man, there is no peace." Peace advocates in the Middle East are in a vulnerable and almost ludicrous situation.

Most of the pressure, however, is on Yasser Arafat, Benjamin Netanyahu and Bill Clinton. President Arafat (as the case with Palestinians at large) is in a fix. The joke about Gaza and Jericho being first and last is fast becoming

a reality. While the situation in the Palestinian territories is stable so far, the Israeli government's intransigence may incapacitate the moderates and open the doors wide for the extremists to thrive and perhaps take over. Asked the other day by a European reporter about whether Palestinians still have faith in the peace process, Arafat answered: "Until now yes." God knows how long such faith remains.

Netanyahu is not helping. The other day he said something to the effect that Palestinians already have control over all Palestinian lands which have Palestinian inhabitants. The rest of the land (under Israeli control) is, in his opinion, vacant, and is needed for Israel's security. What a great statement, and what great logic. This may be a manoeuvre, a tactic, a means of pressure; nevertheless, I do not think that it helps the cause of peace in any way.

There is a great deal of pressure on Arafat to break the current stalemate, to the satisfaction of the Palestinians, of course. There can be no compromises on the part of the Palestinians because as Arafat has aptly put it, there cannot be a "compromise on a compromise." Arafat is between a rock (the Palestinians expecting a breakthrough) and a hard place (his partner Netanyahu not budging an inch).

Premier Netanyahu himself is under pressure. There are those in Israel (his political opponents, the peace advocates, etc.); there is indirect American pressure; there is indirect European pressure; there is pressure from the Arab World and the international community. Most of the pressure, however, lies in the fact that very few people believe that he is serious about peace. Most see him as deliberately procrastinating and subverting the peace process. The real pressure on him then is to prove to everyone that he in fact is serious about peace, and that he means what he says in this regard. He keeps repeating that his is the only Israeli government that can deliver and achieve peace with the Palestinians and Arabs. Well, action only proves the truth of words. The pressure is on him to convince us that he is serious about peace. That can only be done by doing one thing, and one thing only: implementation of peace agreements

and withdrawal from occupied territory. Will he, like Rabin or even Begin, surprise us and become a peacemaker?

But there is also pressure on President Bill Clinton. So far, Israel has not (in Clinton's second term of office) responded positively to any of his initiatives. Not only does Netanyahu turn a deaf ear to him, but he is using his supporters in America and Congress to curb and annul any possible move that Clinton is contemplating. That 81 U.S. senators who signed a letter (upon Netanyahu's request — directly or indirectly, it makes little difference) asking Clinton not to publish his own proposals for breaking the stalemate (let alone pressure Israel) is quite telling. To many in our part of the world that means one thing: The U.S. president is held hostage to the pro-Israeli lobby's whims and wishes. This is what many peace opponents and sceptics have been telling us for years; and this is exactly the moment and the time when their hypotheses and theories (which some among us have tried not to take seriously) are beginning to look powerful and appealing. Clinton is also between a rock and a hard place.

But President Clinton's situation is egregiously ironic: he is being pressured, and is yet expected to exert pressure. Will he be able to break loose from this imprisoning irony and bring peace to the Middle East before his term is over and before the new millennium begins? If the Israeli prime minister himself does not come around and ease the pressure on himself and on everyone else who cares about Mideast peace, the ball will unavoidably be in Clinton's court. The image of "chicken-hearted" America, about which we have been hearing increasingly lately, must be taken seriously. For this to happen, direct or indirect pressure (lots of it) must be exerted on the Israeli government. Until the conflict is resolved peacefully, however, everyone will be under pressure.

Extend the liberal order to all of Europe

By Timothy Garton Ash

OXFORD, England — The attempt to create European Monetary Union points us Europeans towards the unattainable and questionable goal of "unity" in a part of Europe. NATO enlargement steers us toward the desirable and attainable goal of liberal order in the whole of Europe.

It is by now commonplace to observe that Europe lacks the labour mobility, price and wage flexibility and substantial fiscal transfers between states that together make monetary union work in the United States. Nor does Europe have the common language, way of life and single democratic policy that make such things possible.

Euro-optimists argue that the new euro will itself bring about both more economic flexibility, which Continental politicians have largely failed to achieve in their own countries, and more political unification. That is, the currency will create the conditions for its own survival. It's a lot to ask of a little coin.

The underlying gamble is that the failure of monetary union would compel European leaders to take the difficult steps that they have not been prepared to take before. If before 1989 it was the fear of Soviet communism that helped to drive forward West European integration, now it is to be the fear of failure.

Yet this fear is a somewhat abstract threat, especially in a country like Germany, where two-thirds of the population still does not want to give up the strong and well-earned Deutsche mark for the untried euro.

Actually, the Germans might be glad to have the mark back. And European politics is still national.

The strains of carrying out monetary union will be expressed through national elections. If things go quite well for a year or two, the Euro-optimists will scoff at us

doubters. But once it becomes apparent that some countries are doing better than others, and unemployment rises from its already very high levels, populist politicians will blame monetary union.

As we have seen with the successes of the ultranationalist Jean-Marie Le Pen in France and, most recently, of the extreme right-wing German People's Union in Saxony-Anhalt, some already scoring with such arguments.

If, as seems likely, the German government — that emerges from this autumn's elections as a "grand coalition" of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, then the votes of the discontented will strengthen the extremes of left and right (as happened with the last "grand coalition" from 1966 to 1969), since the two main parties will both be in power. Italian politics is also vulnerable to a growth of both extremes.

Meanwhile, France and Germany are still divided about how the new currency should be managed: by fully independent central bankers, on the Bundesbank model, or partly also by politicians, with an eye to employment and fixing the euro-dollar rate to help boost European exports.

I am not arguing that monetary union will necessarily fall apart under these strains, and Europe with it. But it will be a very rough ride for some years to come.

This is only half the story. The other half is that coping with the strains will continue to divert European leaders' attention from the truly historic task of spreading the liberal order that we already have inside the

European Union (EU) to the less fortunate parts of the continent where there is still a real danger of war.

The plain fact is that our leaders set the wrong priority after the end of the cold war. For 40 years we had lived in a divided house. In the Western half we had renovated, rewired, knocked rooms together, redecorated, while the Eastern half fell apart. Then in 1989 the wall came down.

What did our leaders do? They decided that what the house most urgently needed was a brand-new, computer-controlled system of air-conditioning in the Western half. And while we set about installing it, the poor tenants in the Eastern half were left to deal as best they could, with minimal help from us.

Some, like the Poles, Hungarians and Czechs, managed an incredible feat of do-it-yourself renovation. But others started turning the furniture and fighting instead. We fiddled in Maastricht while Sarajevo began to burn.

Today, nine years later, reports of the last preparations for monetary union compete with those of imminent war in Kosovo.

True, the EU has finally opened enlargement negotiations with five post-Communist countries: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia. But the word in Brussels is that the earliest they are likely to join is 2003.

There is a real danger that the voters and special interest groups of Western Europe will walk at the costs of enlargement.

West German taxpayers, for example, have been asked to pay many billions of

dollars for unification.

Now they are being asked to accept cuts in welfare spending and to have their savings converted into a currency that will, let's be realistic, be somewhat softer than the mark.

Being asked to pay for enlargement could be the last straw. Right-wing populists — not friends, traditionally, of the Poles or Czechs — are sure to put it that way to voters. So here, too, there is an awkward tension between monetary union and enlargement.

For all its faults, the EU is a precious model of liberal order. It is a system with permanent institutionalised ways to resolve conflicts, supported by a framework of common law and a common market — something unprecedented in European history. But it is precisely this great achievement that is imperilled by the forced march to unity through money. Here, as so often, the best is the enemy of the good.

Even if monetary union works in itself, it may still hinder us in the immense task of extending the liberal order to the whole of Europe — the task that we should have made our top priority after the end of the cold war.

Fortunately, NATO has stepped in where the EU failed to tread, and the Senate's decision in Washington is reason for celebration. But the rest will be up to us Europeans.

The writer, a fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford, is the author, most recently, of "The File: A Personal History."

— International Herald Tribune

G-8: The debt summit?

By Gwynne Dyer

IT LOOKED set to be Banality Week in Birmingham. Last weekend England's second city hosted the Eurovision Song Contest, and this weekend it's the G-7 Economic Summit (or G8, counting Russia).

The Eurovision Song Contest is a festival of blandness in which pop groups from two dozen European countries vie to be inoffensive enough to garner the winning combination of votes. A favourite tactic is to sing songs with no real words in them, so that no language is favoured over any other.

Past Eurovision winners include 'Boom Bang-a-Bang' (1969), 'Dinge Dinge Dong' (1975), 'A Ba Ni Bi' (1978), 'Diggi Loo-Diggi Ley' (1984), and Spain's majestic 1968 composition 'La, la, la' (repeated 138 times). The communiques after most recent economic summits have been equally meaningless. But this year's Eurovision contest was won by Dana International (Nee Yaron Cohen), an Israeli transsexual who is the very opposite of bland, so maybe there's also hope for the Economic Summit meeting on 15-17 May.

The first summit, 23 years ago, was a tightly focussed meeting at which the leaders of the five biggest Western economies, the United States, Japan, Britain, France and Germany, gathered virtually without staffs for an informal two-day brain-storming session on specific economic issues. But then inflation set in.

Italy demanded to be included because it has as many people as France or Britain, and Canada insisted that since its economy was bigger than Italy's, it must be invited as well. Latterly Russia has been coming along too, though it is still excluded from one key economic session. At the same time, the list of topics grew until it now takes teams of "sherpas" half the year to prepare the summit's largely pre-digested final communiqué.

The event gradually degenerated into an annual photo op

where national leaders played at being statesman and little of substance happened. But Britain's new Prime Minister Tony Blair, this year's host, was so appalled by the emptiness and futility of last year's summit in Denver (a mile high, a foot deep, somebody called it) that he resolved this year in Birmingham would be different.

Blair proposed that the leaders focus on just a few issues — international crime, employment, and poor-country debt — while their foreign and finance ministers, meeting separately, dealt with the rest of the agenda. The foreign and finance ministers duly met in London last weekend, issuing a plan for information-sharing to ward off future replays of the Asian financial crisis that will be rubber-stamped by the leaders this weekend. But there's also a chance that they will get serious about Third World debt.

The leaders can't really do much collectively about employment or international crime, but debt is different. Few problems in the world cause more human pain than the crushing debts of the poorest countries, and few problems would be more painless to solve. For the actual amounts owed by the very poor countries are mere pocket change for the nations at the Birmingham summit.

"Countries never go bust," said Walter Wriston, head of the giant Citicorp bank back in the 70s when petrodollars flooded the market, interest rates were low, and Third World countries were encouraged to borrow up to the hilt. Wriston was quite right.

Interest rates rose, and the export commodities from which most Third World countries earn their foreign exchange fell to prices as low as those in the great depression. By the 80s, debt repayments were eating up most of the money that the poorest borrowers earned abroad. Uganda's debt is three times its annual export income, Ethiopia's is ten times, Mozambique's is thirteen times. But countries can't just go bankrupt and start over.

Since 1988 the 'Paris Club' of the main lender countries has made some initiatives to lessen the debt burdens of the

worst affected countries. But in sub-Saharan Africa, home of 33 of the 41 'Highly Indebted Poor Countries' (HIPC), governments are still spending four times as much on debt repayment to rich countries as on health and education services for their own people.

As a direct consequence only one African child in two is in school, and in some countries one-third of the children die before the age of five. "Asia's problems can be solved in a few years," points out Britain's Chancellor Gordon Brown, "but without a concerted effort Africa's crisis will continue." So Brown is urging the summit to agree that by 2000 all 41 'Highly Indebted Poor Countries' will start getting debt relief that reduces their repayments to 20-25 per cent of export earnings. It needs a summit decision, because so far only one HIPC, Uganda, has actually had its debts cut, and that only happened last month. Only three others — Bolivia, Guyana, and Burkina Faso — have even been given dates when the relief will start.

Other people argue that the HIPC initiative is still not nearly enough to rescue these countries from debt slavery. Jubilee 2000, a coalition of more than 70 aid agencies, trade unions, and religious groups, plans to throw a human chain of 40,000 protesters around the Birmingham conference centre on Saturday to ask that the rich countries simply cancel the debts of the very poorest.

Most of the HIPCs have already paid back more than the total of their original loans in interest. Yet few of them have made a dent in the principal, and most now owe more than ever. The entire amount at stake is far less than the defence budgets of the lender countries for a single year, but it highlights the lives of over half a billion people and directly causes the deaths of at least a million children each year.

The leaders inside the conference centre are not wicked men; they just live a long way from the realities of poverty-stricken African villages. But maybe, this time, they will find the imagination and compassion to act.

Trans into ma

Rami G. Khouri

THIS IS a year of ghosts in the Middle East. The haunting specter of the 50th anniversary of the Nakbe (catastrophe) looms large over the region. The return of the Palestinian refugees from the West Bank and Gaza, who were expelled from their homes in 1948, is a painful reminder of the historical wrongs that have been done to the Palestinian people. The ghosts of the past are haunting the present, and the future is uncertain.

The Nakbe was a tragedy that has shaped the Palestinian narrative. It is a story of loss, displacement, and the struggle for justice. The Palestinian people have been living in a state of limbo for decades, and the anniversary of the Nakbe is a time to reflect on the past and to look for a way forward.

The Nakbe was not just a military defeat; it was a cultural and social catastrophe. The Palestinian people were uprooted from their homes and their land, and they have been living in refugee camps ever since. The Nakbe is a wound that has not healed, and it is a wound that must be addressed if there is to be any lasting peace in the region.

The Nakbe is a story that is still being told. It is a story of resilience and of the human spirit. The Palestinian people have shown incredible strength and courage in the face of adversity, and they continue to fight for their rights. The anniversary of the Nakbe is a time to remember the past and to strive for a better future.

The Nakbeh

50 years on

1948-1998

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Transforming memory into maps, political action

Rami G. Khouri

THIS IS a year of ghosts in the Middle East, ghosts that haunt and ghosts that remind, ghosts that have come to haunt this year's dual 50th anniversary commemorations of the 1948 Palestinian Nakbeh and Israeli statehood. They return from the past to speak to us of historical deeds whose impact remains very much alive to our world today. The creation of Israel and the mass displacement, dispossession, occupation and exile of most Palestinians in 1948 ushered in a half century that has been defined by recurring wars and continued conflict between Israelis and Arabs. The ghosts of the past and the traumas they represent have returned this year with striking intensity, reflected most particularly in the nature and focus of the remembrance on the Palestinian and Arab side.

Two aspects of this seem to me to be politically and historically significant: 1) All over the world and even in Israel itself to an extent, parallel narratives recount the condition and mind-sets of both "Israelis" and Palestinians, clearly affirming the symbiotic and eternally linked fates of the Palestinian and Israeli people; and, 2) Palestinians around the world have dramatically reaffirmed their long attachment to their lands and villages in Palestine — by both remembering their trauma of ethnic cleansing and exile at the hands of Jewish armed forces, and simultaneously reasserting their deep and continuing links with their ancestral homeland.

The Palestinian narrative of attachment to the land is not an episodic media event that is manifested here and there, or now and then, for purposes of political drama or emotional entertainment. The striking — even epic and heroic — dimension of the long Palestinian experience since the earliest encounters with Zionism has been the consistent determination simply to live a free and dignified life in one's own homeland and ancestral landscape — a simple human refusal to be evicted and dehumanised. The focus of Palestinian resistance to Zionism in mid-century and today remains firmly anchored in very local places — villages, agricultural fields, bedouin encampments, urban neighbourhoods, bits of sea coast, highland pasture lands, coastal hamlets, and other such traditional configurations for ancient identities.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Nakbeh should see Palestinians recounting their expulsions from their homes and local places. For when Palestine was torn asunder in 1947-48 the Palestinians broadly did not enjoy well established national institutions or identities. The common Palestinian experience of displacement and exile was defined primarily by detachment from an ancestral village, town or other small locality — and thus the Palestinian remembrance of the Nakbeh this year emphasises people's continuing attachment to those same small places. This is why when you ask Palestinians today where they come from, they do not say Palestine, they say Jaffa, Ramleh, Abu Kishk, Salama, Abu Shusha, or the hundreds of other very local places that defined their lives and culture. The profound implications of what is going on in the hearts, minds, memories, homes and offices of Palestinians throughout the world should not be missed: the painful memories of the hundreds of lost Palestinian villages are slowly being transformed into a new form of political action that squarely challenges Israel on the momentous battlefield of attachment to the land. Instead of merely bemoaning the villages, lands and towns that were lost in 1947-48, Palestinians are working diligently to document the many different dimensions of those places and their relations to them: the history and culture of their villages, how they were lost to Zionist forces in 1947-48, what remains there today, the legal status and value of the lands and properties, where the Palestinians from those villages live today, and other such issues.

This is a difficult and painful process — but also an energising and empowering one.

It marks the mass Palestinian antinatal transition from being the helpless victims of history to becoming actors who forge history. At the end of the 20th century, Palestinians are going through the same antinatal and political process that some early Zionists went through at the end of the 19th Century — against substantial odds, they are directing their political activism towards an audacious goal of returning to live in peace and dignity in Palestine.

Early Zionists claimed the right to live in Palestine on the basis of their self-declared ancestral and biblical associations with the land; they remembered their "City of David" in Jerusalem, and their memories successfully propelled them to live in that place again. The Palestinians today are arming themselves with the equally powerful ammunition of historical memory of life on specific pieces of land in Palestine — but with the significant difference that most Palestinians today also hold the keys to the doors of their houses from which they were expelled or fled, and the deeds to their lands in Palestine that their families had lived on for centuries or more.

The most powerful work that I have seen to date on the reconstruction of the Palestinian reality in 1947-48 is a map and register of Palestinian localities that were depopulated in 1948, compiled by the Kuwait-based Palestinian businessman-historian Salman Abu-Sitta. He has spent years painstakingly researching every place from which Palestinians fled or were expelled in 1947-48. He has used and built on the existing works of Palestinian and Israeli scholars, and added new sites (mainly in the Naqab/Negev area) to come up with a list of depopulated Palestinian localities that he believes is both comprehensive and accurate. The result of his work is a rather stunning map entitled "Palestine 1948: 50 Years After Al Nakbeh: the towns and villages depopulated by the Zionist invasion of 1948." He lists a total of 531 localities, including bedouin encampments and lands that were usually not listed in earlier scholars' lists (the main earlier ones being Walid Khalidi's list of 418 Palestinian villages that were depopulated, destroyed or reoccupied by Israelis, and the Israeli historian Benny Morris' list of 369 villages and towns that partly draw on recently released Israeli historical information). Abu-Sitta's total of 531 localities significantly expands the size of a population transfer that was already large and traumatic.

Abu-Sitta's colour-coded map shows the location of every Palestinian place that was depopulated, and provides information on when and how it was depopulated. Some villages and towns were subjected to Jewish attacks in the period between the U.N. partition plan and the onset of the Zionist Plan Dalet campaign to expel Palestinians from some strategic areas before the British left Palestine (November 1947-March 1948). Other places were depopulated between March and May 1948, again before the end of the British mandate and the withdrawal of British troops. Some Palestinian population centres were depopulated during 1948, up to the first truce (May 16-June 12, 1948), in the period June 13-October 13, 1948 up to the second truce, or in the period of October 14, 1948 to July 20, 1949 when all Armistice agreements were signed.

The map and register also explain why and how each settlement was depopulated — whether because of Jewish attacks and/or massacres (270 localities), forced expulsion by Jewish forces (122), psychological warfare (12), fear of Jewish attack or being caught up in the fighting (38), fear after hearing of the fall of nearby Arab towns (49), abandonment on Arab orders (6), or other/unknown causes (34).

Jewish colonies in Palestine in 1948 are listed on the map, as are Palestinian towns that are now inhabited by Israelis. Equally striking on the map are several tables listing: — the districts where the displaced Palestinians came from, giving their numbers in 1948 and today (i.e., 805,067 displaced Palestinians in 1948 now number 4,942 million); (the number of displaced Palestinians from 1948 remains contested,

with Israelis giving a lower estimate of around 520,000, and most U.N. and independent estimates around 650,000-750,000);

— the 33 towns and villages that were subjected to Jewish terror and massacres, with dates for each one;

— the period in which the Palestinians left their localities (52 per cent of the Palestinians, from 213 localities, left while the British mandate was still in effect, 42 per cent left during the 1948 war, and 6 per cent left after the Armistice agreements);

— the place of residence of the Palestinian refugees today (Jordan 2,328 million, West Bank 1,596 million, Gaza Strip 1,004 million, Israel 953,497, Syria 465,662, Lebanon 430,183, Saudi Arabia 274,762, etc.);

The register that accompanies the map has even more detailed information on the status of the Palestinian localities in 1948 and today.

The significance of this project is not primarily in the specific facts that it provides — for many of these facts were known before, many are still disputed by Palestinian and Israeli historians, and some of the information will change in line with new historical research. Its significance, rather, rests in its symbolism as the new battleground of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is not only a map of territory that was lost to Israel, but of places whose identity and ownership remain contested by Israelis and Palestinians who share an equal love for the place.

This is not a map about the past, but one about the present and the future, about the very active sense of Palestinian attachment to specific places and pieces of land in Palestine. It vividly manifests the strong and intensifying Palestinian determination to right the wrongs of the past, most particularly by deepening people's links to their ancestral villages in Palestine.

To put these places on a paper map — with names, symbols, populations, and the size of their agricultural or pastoral hinterlands — is more than an act of historical cartography. It is also a reflection of cultural vigour and political determination of the highest magnitude. No wonder Abu-Sitta quotes the Israeli writer Uri Avneri as saying that the Palestinian maps of 1948 showing "hundreds of towns and villages that disappeared... are more dangerous than any bomb."

The 50 years commemorations of the Nakbeh and Israeli statehood reflect the simultaneous vitality of both human cultures and political realities. The Palestinians in a century have experienced many of the same historical pains that Jews have suffered over the past two and a half millennia — forced exile, dispossession, dispersal, longing for home, subjugation, ethnic cleansing, massacres, vilification, and virtually everything else except being subjected to a genocidal eradication. The Nakbeh commemoration this year also shows that Palestinians have the same determination to return and live in their ancestral lands as did the early Zionists a century ago. In this respect, the Nakbeh commemoration is not about what was lost, but rather about what has been retained in the memories and lives of Palestinians around the world. It speaks not of pity, uncertainty, and helplessness, but of pride, certitude, and resoluteness. The hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who were displaced in 1947-48 now number nearly seven million, and every single one of them is patiently plotting his and her ancestral village in Palestine on maps that are becoming larger and more accurate with time. This should be a signal to Israelis and Jews that this conflict must be resolved through inclusion, mutual respect and accommodation — rather than through any exclusivist claims to eternal sovereignty once upon a time unilaterally offered by deities that were young, jealous and violent. (The map is available from PRC, Crown House, North Circular Road, London NW107PN, U.K., tel 44 181 4330919).

The writer is a political columnist and publisher.



Losing her tent in the winter storms of February 1969 was a major tragedy for this displaced Palestinian refugee woman who found shelter in Baqaa refugee camp, north of Amman (UNRWA photo)

Road to reconciliation

Alia A. Toukan

PERHAPS IT was the power of history that scared the Israelis. This could be the reason the Beirut-based PLO archive centre documenting Palestinian losses was one of the first targets of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

As if the memory of all that had been lost by the Palestinians would be forgotten with the disappearance of the archives.

Fifty years since the Palestinian Nakbeh, the wounds inflicted on its victims are still open and raw. The constant memory of what many of them have endured for half a century, and their yearning to return to their home, have not been erased.

It will take more than just a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for a reconciliation between the Palestinians and the Israelis, say analysts and sociologists. Such an achievement can only happen if there is sufficient recognition by the Jewish State of its responsibility for the Nakbeh, they say.

"There was an active and systematic drive by Israel to displace the Palestinians and to get them out of their land," says University of Jordan (UJ) sociology Professor Musa Shiehi. "Based on this, the Israelis must accept moral responsibility for the suffering of the Palestinians in the last 50 years."

Analysts and sociologists point to growing Arab acceptance of Israel as an independent regional identity, since the launching of the Madrid Middle East Peace Process in 1991.

But the official ending of the state of conflict between the Israelis on the one hand, and the Palestinians, Jordanians and Egyptians under successive peace deals, on the other hand, represented a historic defeat for the Arabs, says Mustafina Hamameh, Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies at UJ.

"We have lost the battle for Palestine. The fact that various Arab states have sealed peace treaties with Israel, means that we have come to terms with our defeat," says Dr. Hamameh.

"What this means is that we have accepted, at least implicitly, to live with an independent sovereign Jewish existence in Palestine based on the division of the land. This is a historic compromise — one that must be matched by a similar gesture of goodwill by the Israelis, argues Dr. Hamameh.

While there has been a formal recognition of Israel and its right to exist by several Arab governments, analysts point to the lack of reciprocal steps taken by Israel, especially by the current hard-line Likud-led government, to reconcile itself with the Palestinian identity and a future independent state.

Regardless of their reasons and motives, the Labour party — whose leaders signed peace deals with the PLO in 1993 and with Jordan in 1994 — has undergone profound changes in its perception of the Palestinian problem, something that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is not yet ready to face, they add.

They point to Mr. Netanyahu's repeated statements that he is opposed to a viable Palestinian state with any real powers, and his threats to annex the West Bank if the Palestinians declare an independent state in 1999.

"We are the injured party. We are the people who have been uprooted from our land, yet we have accepted our defeat and the state of Israel. Now the Israelis should bring an end to their state of enmity with the Palestinians by accepting an independent state and admitting what they have done to them," says Dr. Hamameh.

Israeli recognition of its responsibility for the Nakbeh should come in three forms, say analysts. The establishment of an independent Palestinian state, an official apology by the Jewish state, and compensation and repatriation for many of the 3.5 million Palestinian refugees scattered all over the region.

There has to be some sort of collective return. Maybe not all, but a significant number of Palestinian refugees must have the right of return. This will bring about reconciliation," says Dr. Shiehi.

But this is a sensitive point for many Israelis from across the political spectrum who refuse to accept such an idea for fear of losing the 'Jewishness' of their state.

Because of this, there can never be true reconciliation, says former Minister of Information, Ibrahim Izzidine. "The man from Haifa, whom Israel insists won't be allowed to return home, how will he ever be satisfied?"

However, Arabs cannot deny visible changes in Israeli society. Scenes of Peace Now activists scuffling

with Israeli soldiers in protest over settlement activities in the West Bank, and evidence of increasingly outspoken Israeli historians and intellectuals cannot be ignored.

But to many Arabs these changes are superficial, and represent a slim margin of Israeli society. Perhaps so, argue others, but it is still significant and worthy of note.

For some, including Jordan's ambassador to Tel Aviv, Omar Rifai, there is growing recognition by Israelis of the Palestinian Nakba. "There is definitely an increasing awareness in Israeli society of the suffering of the Palestinian people. Of course this is not across the board, but the perception is growing. Those who view the problem on moral grounds may be few, but they do exist," he insists.

The problem remains, though, that it has not yet reached the official level. "This is the key difference," says Dr. Shiehi. "Internal recognition in Israel has to be transformed into official policy. This will have ramifications on official Israeli policy with regards to the Palestinians, and on the way they are treated."

But the absence of a proper peace process makes the idea of reconciliation seem unattainable, say officials and sociologists. They point to post-peace Israeli acts of aggression, such as the Qana massacre of April 1996, numerous closures slapped on the West Bank and Gaza, continued house demolitions, settlement activities on occupied-Palestinian land, and Mr. Netanyahu's intransigence in moving ahead on signed-upon peace accords.

Many believe that an Israel at peace with its Arab neighbours does not behave any differently than one in a state of war. "Those who speak of peace and reconciliation are only dreaming," says a former government official.

"If Israel wants to live in this part of the world it must depart from its Zionist ideology," insists UJ Sociology Professor Sari Nasir. "There is a saying 'he who lives in an island must not make an enemy of the sea.' Eventually something has to give. Israel cannot go on much longer defying the Palestinians and everyone in the region."

Arabs, for their part, have to exert more reconciliation efforts by giving the Israelis greater personal security, some argue. "For the Israeli peace must mean security," says Mr. Rifai. "In many ways Israelis may require us to recognise them, but it is even more important to them that we give them security."

Dr. Hamameh points to the insecurity of Israel as a nation. "Many Israelis have told me in private 'yesterday Jericho, today Ramallah, and tomorrow Haifa.' We need to make the Israeli on the other side secure in the future. This is the major part we have to play."

Acts of terrorism against Israeli civilians should not have been, and should no longer be an option, say some analysts and officials. But in the view of many Arabs, security can never be bestowed upon Israel as a state until it comes to terms with its own role in radicalising Palestinians and other Arabs, such as the Lebanese.

"Terrorism against Israel is a by-product of the political situation. Nobody is killing Jews because they are Jews," says one official requesting anonymity.

As for historical reconciliation, this may never be possible between many Arabs and Jews as both claim historic right to the same piece of land. Many Arabs insist, however, that the one indisputable truth is that Israel usurped land inhabited by Palestinians for centuries and made an entire nation homeless. As such, the Jewish State must make reconciliation efforts accordingly.

The fact remains that for most Arabs, even if there is a recognition of Israel as a state, this does not mean an acceptance of Israel's exclusive right to the land or their version of history, say analysts. Likewise, not all Israelis or Jews who advocate peace with the Palestinians do so out of a sense of moral obligation or a belief in the alienable rights of the Palestinians.

But the insistence on historical rights must not be the basis of any negotiations, says Mr. Rifai. "In a realistic world, you cannot be looking at historical rights, while at the same time searching for compromise," he notes.

"Some people from both sides may insist on a reconciliation based on historic rights, but this is what makes the difference between a dogmatic person and a peace-maker," says Mr. Rifai.

The writer is a Jordan Times reporter.



ALL EYES ON JERUSALEM: Since it occupied Jerusalem in 1967, Israel has launched sustained efforts to drive Palestinians out of the Holy City and destroy its Arab-Muslim, Christian identity. The city of peace remains a victim of vicious occupation (UNRWA photo)



LIVING WITH FEAR: For the Palestinian refugees of Rashidiah camp, Israeli military attacks on south Lebanon have meant death and destruction (UNRWA photo)

(LEFT) LEST HUMANITY FORGETS: Shatila Camp, Beirut, Sept. 20, 1982 (UNRWA photo)



THE SUFFERING CONTINUES: Three quarters of a million Palestinians lost their homes in the war of 1948 and became refugees in neighbouring Arab countries. In 1949, UNRWA was established to provide relief, health and education to those refugees on a temporary basis. But 50 years after the Nakbeh, the offspring of the refugees still depend on UNRWA for many of their basic humanitarian needs (UNRWA photo)



GLIMPSE OF HOPE: Palestinian refugees in Gaza play on the streets of Jabaliyya camp in Gaza, the first Palestinian city to enjoy self-rule after the signing of the Oslo agreement (UNRWA photo)



LIFE UNDER CURFEW: A Palestinian family look through the door of their house which they were prevented from leaving by Israeli soldiers fighting Palestinian youth who launched their intifada against Israeli occupation in Gaza in 1987. The intifada forced the international community to recognise the suffering of the Palestinians (UNRWA photo)

The Palestinian filmmaker Qattan delivered the following speech at the Arab Club of Georgetown University on May 1, 1998.

WHEN I was first invited to talk tonight, I was told that I would have to describe what it means to me to be a Palestinian through the work I do as a filmmaker. I was also told, rather alarmingly, that I would be speaking at the same occasion as Dr. Hani Adrawi. So, on a rather mischievous impulse, I thought I would call the topic 'Culture Vs. Politics, given that I Adrawi is one of the great movie directors from one to the other. But then I recalled at the thought of his famous sharp words putting a down and decided against the idea. I was told that it means to be Palestinian. Paradoxically, it has meant that we turned into something of a 'Englishman' — for with us the Palestine problem — I would probably be in England today — but a strange kind of Englishman, a mosaic of different, troublesome and contradictory things. I am sure that most of you here are Arab — Americans will sympathise with me that describing this identity is not an easy or straightforward matter. At such great geographical distance from Palestine and the Arab World, it is very often tempting to discard the remnants of the culture I forcibly evoked when I came to England at the age of eleven right at the start of the Lebanese civil war. I would not be exaggerating if I told you that almost every morning I secretly say to myself 'Why am I wasting my time?' After all, the remnants of my Palestinian and Arab identity often seems sentimental, something one evokes after a few drinks or during moments of self-melancholy. Wouldn't it be that much simpler if I were to go to the local registry office, change my name to Richard Jones, lose the Arabic language from my vocabulary and keep my head down in an evasive silence whenever the subject of the Middle East came up in conversation? Perhaps it would. But the truth is simply cannot happen like this. So because I feel any great national affiliation to the Palestinians, on the contrary, nationalism has often seemed to me to humiliate Palestinians. I am not sure how much I have tried to ignore it. Palestine has remained an essential, irrefutable and striking aspect of my humanity. It took me very long to realise this. To realise that if this identity is to be

1950s G Pales

Sakher Abu Al Oun

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Gaza Strip became the 'zero' of the Palestinian revolution, as the first Palestinian fedayeen took arms against Israel in the 1950s immediately after the 1948 war that followed Israel's declaration of independence left the Gaza Strip an isolated pocket on the Mediterranean coast that flooded by tens of thousands of refugees, living under Egyptian military rule.

The Nakbeh, or catastrophe, of the 1948 war to Israel left Palestinians crying out for aid, but it was not until 1956 that Gaza was allowed to take up arms in the face of their anger took shape as organised attacks. Palestinian leaders, such as Gaza veteran Khalil Al Wazir, better known by his nom de guerre Abu Jihad, did later use the experience from the 1950s when Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation launched the 'revolution' in 1965.

The experience of the 1950s units in Gaza which were sent to the 1965 revolution, said Abu Rahma, who was active in Gaza at the time. The 1948 war, he said, gave Gaza's authorities weapons, but small-scale operations on a scale with minor border attacks into Israel. On Feb. 25, 1955, Israeli forces bombed the Egyptian base in Gaza City, killing 39 soldiers, and 100 of Palestinians took

A scene from the street they be allowed. Then Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser had been encouraged nationalism because since 1948, on the work of the guerrillas. The Egyptian chief in Gaza, Hafiz, who was be assassinated, armed and fedayeen, who heighten numbers fighters. 'Hafiz was a tyr. I joined a group which was him. Israel invaded twice, the first but I escaped later,' said Dhiya. Egyptian released from a Palestinian who joined for earlier into Israel and

Semantics of a Palestinian identity

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WHEN I was first invited to talk here tonight, I was told that I would have to describe what it means to me to be a Palestinian through the work I do as a filmmaker. I was also told, rather alarmingly, that I would be speaking on the same occasion as Dr. (Hanan) Ashrawi. So, on a rather mischievous impulse, I thought I would call the talk Culture Vs. Politics, given that Dr. Ashrawi is one of the great modern defectors from one to the other.

But then I recoiled at the thought of her famously sharp words putting me down and decided against the idea. So what does it mean to be Palestinian to me? Paradoxically, it has meant that I have turned into something of an Englishman — for without the Palestine problem I would probably not be in England today — but a strange breed of Englishman, a mosaic of differing, troublesome and contradictory selves. I am sure that most of you here, who are Arab — Americans, will sympathise (with me) that describing this identity is not an easy or straightforward matter.

At such great geographical distance from Palestine and the Arab World, it is very often tempting to discard the remnants of the culture I forcibly evacuated when I came to England at the age of eleven right at the start of the Lebanese civil war. I would not be exaggerating if I told you that almost every morning I secretly say to myself: "Why am I wasting my time?" After all, what remains of my Palestinian and Arab identity often seems sentimental, something one evokes after a few drinks or during moments of self-pity.

Wouldn't life be that much simpler if I were to go to the local registry office, change my name to Richard Jones, ban the Arabic language from my vocabulary and keep my head down in embarrassed silence whenever the subject of the Middle East came up in conversation? Perhaps it would. But the truth is it simply cannot happen like this.

Not because I feel any great national affiliation to the Palestinians: on the contrary, nationalism has often seemed to me to banalise Palestine. But because no matter how much I have tried to ignore it, Palestine has remained an essential, inextinguishable and defining aspect of my humanity.

It took me very long to realise this. To realise that if this identity is to be

my way of communicating with the world, of sharing with it my and my people's stories and listening to the stories of others, I must think of it as a moral imperative, not a natural or inherent one. What does this mean? It means to endow my Palestinian identity with a universal, moral quality which I often envy my South African friends and acquaintances in the eighties: a quality which made the anti-apartheid struggle such an easy cause to defend, whereas ours seemed so shrouded in contradictions and difficulties. In other words, I wanted to define being a Palestinian in terms which would make it possible to transcend the tragic dispossession of fifty years and allow for a continuity in our struggle against Zionism and other forms of often self-inflicted injustice.

How did this realisation come about? When I arrived at my first English boarding school on a cold October afternoon, my excitement was quickly dispelled by a sudden realisation of how extremely alien my new environment was going to be. I spoke hardly any English at the time, having attended a French school in Beirut. But as children tend to do, I think I must have quickly realised that there was no turning back. However much I silently whimpered under my sheets at night, or wrote long letters in my childish Arabic to my parents enjoining them to take me back to Beirut, I secretly knew that I had to somehow embrace my new self, my new English-boy self in order to survive. And do so with deep conviction! You can imagine my anxiety. At the time, the words Palestinian and Arab, I was quick to discover, were synonymous with the most grotesque, racist rendering by my English environment of a violent, blood-thirsty, conspicuous Arab dressed with a tea towel on his head and invariably followed by his harem. This made my frustrated attempts at getting round the choppy, cheeky school-boy English all the more difficult; my premature puberty all the more suspect in the eyes of the rosy-cheeked English boys.

So that by the end of the year, being an Arab became a faintly whispered secret to be spoken only with my most trusted friends.

Later, when my life became more focussed on my next date rather than any other, weightier subject, and when being an Arab seemed something of a liability with girls, I went through a phase of absolute self-denial.

Didn't want to speak Arabic, or hear the news, nothing. It was a cleansing process that did not work. This was

1982: the enormity of Palestinian and Lebanese suffering during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was overwhelming.

It made me angry, even hateful — but it also simplified my relationship with my identity. The political urgency of the situation forced upon me the realisation that whatever the emotional and sentimental anxieties I as a middle class student may be experiencing, there was out there a struggle which could, in one stroke, resolve all these anxieties and allow me to be part of a people — without any questions being asked.

But then, in 1985, just out of university, I made my first trip to Palestine. I was of course naively expecting some kind of epiphany that would once and for all confirm my irrevocable bond with my homeland.

No such thing occurred naturally. First, here I was being asked by my supposed fellow countrymen where I was from! I tried very hard to put on my heaviest Palestinian accent, but they invariably detected a Lebanese turn of phrase here or a literal translation from the English there.

By pure chance, the family I was staying with had a rebellious son who was a member of the Communist party. I took up with his group, punning on my best, though somewhat imaginary — revolutionary mantle. However, I was often reminded of my bourgeois origins, even though I had diligently evoked the 18th Brumaire more than once. And while we sat in this or that cafeteria discussing the latest developments and upheavals in Palestinian politics, I would be chided for admiring the scenery or for staring too long at an attractive woman passing by, accused of the grossest kind of romantic nationalism. A few weeks later, I returned to England with a feeling of profound guilt and shame!

The following year, I did my first film internship on Michel Khleifi's "Wedding in Galilee." Pre-intifada Palestine was full of promise. Unlike today, it had all the lightness and sensuality of a people on the verge of rebellion and disenfranchisement. And it was during that summer going up and down the hill villages near Ramallah, making tea and coffee for rather mercurial actresses, that I gradually shed the feelings of guilt I had come to find so burdensome. I began to realise that the most overwhelming, most valuable characteristic of the Palestinians (but perhaps their greatest weakness in the face of Israeli brutality) was their enormous generosity and unflinching kind-

ness.

I began to discover their stories, which were so rich and so modestly told.

This was better than the slogans of politics, less hollow, more concrete. It offered me a real sense of a past — which I did share — but also of a vision of Palestine as clear as it was all embracing and universal.

Only six months later, a brilliant and irresistible explosion of revolt erupted in Palestine. The Palestinians' initial courage and bravery in the face of armed repression; the intelligence they demonstrated in their disarming attachment to non-violent methods of resistance; their patient but proud suffering made it absolutely exhilarating to be Palestinian and to pronounce the word with uninhibited ease and force. In retrospect, one can speak of a degree of purity and lucidity, which the Arabs have rarely been able to achieve this century.

Tragically though this wave was short-lived. Within eighteen months, the whole movement was hijacked by factional politics. The corruption and narrow vision of our leaders once again overcame us, as it had previously done in Jordan, Lebanon and elsewhere. What had been lost? I believe that it was principally a loss of vision. Instead of focussing our efforts on safeguarding our humanity, on protecting the individual, on nourishing her or his talents and sense of freedom and independence, the life of the Palestinians — both inside and outside — became captive to abstract slogans, arbitrary political violence and forms of social repression so extreme as to be unprecedented in our country.

Perhaps this was why it was so easy for our leadership to gamble so disastrously with the lives of more than 300,000 Palestinians living in Kuwait during the Gulf war; to perpetuate the uprising to a degree that it became a hated burden; to allow a dramatic drop in our standards of education and an appalling rise in the abuse of women's rights. And then, to sign away most, if not all of our fundamental national rights.

It was easy, above all, because we let it happen. Fifty years after the nakbeh, these I believe are the questions that must surely remain at the centre of our national consciousness — and conscience. For if we are willing to ask them — and ask them we must — only then perhaps will we begin to patch together again a truly vibrant, imaginative and just vision of Palestine and the Arab World, rather than the shattered



GENERATIONS APART: Since the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948, this Gaza woman has been a refugee for the most part of her life. She lives in a two-room shelter in one of the eight refugee camps in Gaza, along with three generations of her offspring (UNRWA photo)

and hollow one we are so painfully, so reluctantly swallowing today.

And having made the decision that that asking these questions in my work is the supreme act of belonging to Palestine: that my people's happiness and freedom — and not their politicians' welfare — must be my principle concern, it became clear and profoundly challenging to me how I must be a Palestinian.

To retell our stories; to ask the harshest but most necessary questions: to always maintain the individual at the centre of the question of Palestine: this is the moral imperative I talked about at the beginning of this speech. For other-

wise why are we fighting? Given that we have lost the political and military options — if that is, we ever had them — is not our sense of justice and love of freedom and truth our only remaining weapon? Perhaps. But when we have ourselves made each other suffer, made women suppress their desires for fulfilment in the name of the revolution or of religion, children their imagination, citizens their right not to be tortured and workers and teachers their right to strike — how can we look the world in the face and ask it to support us? How is it possible, once again, to wake up in the morning and say: Yes, I am and want to be a Palestinian Arab?

1950s Gaza: Classroom of Palestinian resistance

Sakher Abu Al Oun

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Gaza Strip became the classroom of the Palestinian "revolution," as the first Palestinian fedayeen took up arms against Israel in the years immediately after the 1948 Catastrophe.

The 1948 war that followed Israel's declaration of independence left the Gaza Strip an isolated pocket on the Mediterranean coast that was flooded by tens of thousands of refugees, living under Egyptian military rule.

The Nakbeh, or "Catastrophe," of the 1948 loss to Israel left Palestinians crying out for action; but it was not until Egypt allowed Gazan guerrillas to take up arms in 1955 that their anger took shape as organised attacks.

Palestinian leaders, such as Gaza veteran Khalil Al Wazir, better known by his nom de guerre Abu Jihad, would later use the experience from the 1950s when Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) launched the "Palestinian revolution" in the late 1960s.

The experience of the fedayeen units in Gaza was the schoolroom from which the leaders of the 1965 revolution emerged, said Faysal Abu Rahma, who was a lawyer in Gaza at the time.

After the 1948 war, Egyptian authorities ordered Gazans to turn in their weapons, but small bands of armed Palestinians continued to operate on a small scale with minor cross-border attacks into Israel.

But on Feb. 25, 1955, Israel bombed the Egyptian army base in Gaza City, killing 39 soldiers, and scores of Palestinians took



A scene from a Gaza refugee camp decades later (UNRWA photo)

to the streets demanding they be allowed to take up arms.

Then Egyptian president Jamal Abdul Nasser, who had been reluctant to encourage Palestinian nationalism boiling in Gaza since 1948, ordered the creation of an underground network of "fedayeen," or guerrillas.

The Egyptian intelligence chief in Gaza, Mustapha Hafez, who would in 1959 be assassinated by Israel, armed and trained the fedayeen, who at their height numbered about 700 fighters.

"Hafez was a hero, a martyr. I joined the fedayeen groups which worked with him. Israel imprisoned me twice, the first time in 1956, but I escaped three years later," said Diyab Aruri, 85. Egyptian authorities released from their prisons Palestinians who they had jailed for earlier infiltrations into Israel and let them join

the fedayeen. One of them was Abu Jihad, who would become Arafat's deputy in the PLO and was killed in 1987 by Israeli agents in Tunis.

But the street protests which led to the creation of the fedayeen also forced Egypt to renounce an agreement it had reached with the United Nations to permanently settle thousands of refugees in the Sinai Peninsula, which had outraged Palestinians demanding a return to their homes in what had become Israel.

The fedayeen groups launched almost daily raids into Israel, starting from August 1955 when they killed three Jewish workers near what is now the Erez Crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel.

The raids varied from attacks on new Jewish settlements near Gaza and on army posts to sabotage of water and electricity lines. Their hardest-hitting opera-

tion came in April 1956, when some 300 fedayeen were able to penetrate about 50 kilometres into Israel, to just outside Tel Aviv.

"The fedayeen were able to terrify the Israelis living near the borders. Most of them fled further into Israel," said Ata Abu Kirsh, who joined the fedayeen and later became a Fatah official.

The fedayeen operations came to an end when Israel, along with France and Great Britain, invaded the Sinai Peninsula in November 1956 and occupied the Gaza Strip for four months.

But the idea of armed resistance had been born and would later influence the creation of Fatah, which began its operations in the West Bank in 1965.

In the early days of Fatah's formation, "there was the idea that we must continue resistance just as the fedayeen did in the 1950s," said Abu Kirsh.

Palestine in the Western media:

Continued bias in Israel's favour, failure on Arabs' part

Dima Hamdan

KEVIN COSTNER, Dustin Hoffman, Steven Spielberg, and other stars and popular figures were hosts in a two-hour special entitled "To Life: America celebrates Israel's 50th Anniversary."

The politically-charged "entertainment" which ran on CBS on April 15, also featured a statement by U.S. President Bill Clinton in which he praised the founders of Israel for "making a once barren desert bloom" and "building a thriving democracy in hostile terrain."

He also re-emphasised the ancient myth: "land without a people for a people without a land."

The apparent distorted propaganda should come to no surprise, especially from the CBS after it turned out that Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, was the great-uncle of the network's chief, Leslie Moonves.

This is only a tiny example of the extravagant and intensive media campaign set out to celebrate Israel's jubilee — or the 50th anniversary of the nakbeh (catastrophe) marking the creation of Israel on parts of British-mandated Palestine.

Those interested can visit "Israel at Fifty," a popular Israeli-run government site at <http://www.israel.org/mfa/> featuring a detailed agenda classified "by continent."

Film festivals, photographic exhibitions and parades are only few examples of the various events which have been taking place since December 1997 and are expected to run until December this year. The site also includes nine different chat rooms, an electronic version of what was known as the Palestine Post. This version, dated May 16, 1948, supposedly chronicles the

historic moment when "Medinat Yisrael" was formed in what was termed "The Most Crowded Hours in Palestine's History," as well as links to special reports, and full archived audio news reports made by CNN, BBC, The Chicago Tribune, The New York Times, and others.

It is indisputable that this year, Israel's "Independence" has become more plausible than July 4 — U.S. Independence Day.

Arabs, it seems, are irritated with Israel's ostentatious revelry.

They are frustrated because they do not hold the means or influence to set up a comprehensive campaign to remind the world of the "nakbeh" — the 1948 war that resulted in destruction of 418 villages and the exodus of 700,000 Palestinian refugees from the land which became Israel — while Israel uses the "consumed" Holocaust to cloud on the world's conscience and deflect attention from its long-record of human and legal violations.

This, in return, has emerged as an excuse for many Arabs not to plan for such crucial occasions. The lack of influence and facilities is the only response many Arabs can give to the millions of Palestinian refugees who cannot seem to comprehend why the world has become in favour of their enemy.

In reality, Arabs are not "entirely" lacking in resources, but they seem to have simply failed to employ them.

To summarise the efforts: apart from the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), almost none of the Arab satellite channels mentioned "Al Nakbeh," only a handful of journalists contributed with

emotionally-charged articles to local papers, and almost none of the major Arab websites made any coverage on this occasion. Those who own the majority of resources made no effort to commemorate the Palestinian tragedy and passed the enduring task on to small-scale organisations with limited access and funding.

Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre has probably established the most significant campaign to revive the memory of the "nakbeh." Formed in Ramallah in 1996, the centre decided to dedicate its fall of 1997 and 1998 for this occasion: visitors of <http://www.sakakini.org> will find a full schedule of commemorative activities being held in the United States and the occupied territories. The Centre is currently hosting a number of witnesses and survivors from the Deir Yassin massacre in a series of lectures which will later be collected in a book and will also be compiled to form a visual/oral history archive.

The cultural schedule also includes the screening of various films, plays and exhibitions. Other related links established by his centre are <http://alnakba.org>, and <http://www.deiryassin.org>. Unfortunately, such relentless efforts are only a fraction of "what should have been done."

Fifty years have gone, Israel has become increasingly vocal and has full control of the media, while Arabs continue to praise themselves when they manage to produce a documentary or two, or establish a web-site, along with our usual dosage of protests.

The need for planned campaigns is more pressing than ever.

While the media industry is growing at a phenomenal speed, it remains absurd to have an increase in Arab satellite channels and websites if they are unable to play the "media game," in which Israel has become a model to follow.

"Tkuma," for example, is a 22-episode documentary which was recently aired on Israeli Television for three months. This show dealt extensively with the sensitive local issues of expulsion, dispossession, and killing of Arabs. It also featured narratives by Palestinians, Israeli Arabs, and Sephardic Jewish immigrants who had a grim vision of Israel.

The programme stirred a storm of protests inside Israel. The director of the show, Mrs. Weiss-Berkowitz, even received death threats and Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon filed a letter to Education Minister, Yitzhak Levy, demanding the programme be banned from schools. Others urged the show to be taken off the air.

The true account of Israel's history might be exposed to the its own community through programs like "Tkuma." However, it appears that the entire media has been employed to polish their image to the international community and deflect attention from growing friction inside the Israeli society.

At the end of the day, despite their conflicting views, all Israelis went out to the beaches to celebrate and watch air shows and all five continents shared their jubilee celebration while Arabs tuned in to watch Arab satellites celebrate their own anniversaries.

The writer is a sales executive at Byte Middle East and a freelance reporter.

Jordanian-Palestinian coordination necessary in final stages

Ghadeer Taher

AS ISRAEL and the Palestinians inch closer towards final status negotiations, vital questions of importance on a permanent settlement could affect Jordan and historic ties between the peoples on both sides of the holy river remain unanswered.

Apart from overall political statements assuring mutual solidarity, the Jordanian government and the Palestinian leadership have yet to agree, in writing, on any of the complex terms on the agenda of the Palestinian-Israeli final status negotiations as each one of them touches strategic, political, economic and social interests of the three parties.

From Palestinian refugees to water, Jerusalem, borders, and even Jewish settlements, any Israeli-Palestinian deal on any of these issues will have serious repercussions on Jordan's national security interests.

Though both Israeli and Palestinian leaders have agreed that Jordan does have some sort of a say in status talks, the parameters and the framework for the Jordanian role remains yet to be defined.

"There is a common Jordanian-Palestinian understanding that Jordan has an interest in many of the items on the final status agenda," said a senior Jordanian official. "We are not looking for a role in this is an independent sovereign Palestinian state, but we must coordinate to preserve our interests," he told the Jordan Times in an interview.

Jordan developed close historic, economic, political and demographic links with the West Bank, which was part of the Kingdom from 1950 until Israel occupied it in 1967. Even during the occupation and after it severed legal and administrative links with the area in 1988, it continued to supervise schools and health centres, and to issue birth, marriage and death certificates to residents of the area. The Jordanian dinar, along

with the Shekel, is still in the dominant currency in the West Bank. Although the Kingdom speaks for the nearly two million Palestinian refugees and displaced persons living in the country, who hold Jordanian nationality, there is no formal agreement on the subject between Jordan and the Palestinians.

"Refugees in Jordan are Jordanian citizens and there is no trespassing on our sovereign right to represent them," said the same official. "But this does not negate their status as refugees and their right to return and to compensation as stipulated in U.N. Resolution 194."

Questions related to dual nationality, voting rights and other political matters associated with the Palestinian right of return and the legal rights of those who choose to take it once a Palestinian state is created, await a final settlement.

Apart from a four-party committee on refugees grouping Jordan, Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinians, no serious negotiations have taken place on the subject that remains a sensitive issue to all parties.

The work of the committee itself has been suspended for over two years because of Israeli-Egyptian wrangling.

"There is a general consensus that all these thorny issues must wait until after the Palestinians reach their permanent status agreement with the Israelis and hopefully establish their own state," said a leading Jordanian politician.

"But there is a school of thought that believes that we should establish at least conceptual agreements with the Palestinians now to preserve our national interests and security."

His Majesty King Hussein, who constantly advocates the creation of a Palestinian state, which President Yasser Arafat said he may declare by May 1999, said recently that Jordan had a pivotal role to play in matters affecting its interests



The Baqaa refugee camp, north of Amman (UNRWA photo)

in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

"Of course, we do not want a seat at the negotiating table, but we will make our positions clear to both sides," said the Jordanian official.

Meanwhile, a chapter in the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty signed in 1994 has recognised Jordan's 50-year "special role" as guardian of holy place in Arab east Jerusalem.

This clause, based on the Hashemites' historic role in overseeing and preserving Muslim and Christian sites in the Holy City, was sought by Jordan to prevent a legal vacuum that would transfer custody of these places over to Israel

pending a final settlement.

But the move immediately revived dormant fears among Palestinians, including senior officials who suspect that of Amman's full-fledged peace treaty with Israel might lead to a dominant role for Jordan in the West Bank.

However, the current Likud-led Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appears to be keeping its options open by avoiding commitment to a specific interpretation of the legally-contentious clause.

The question of regional surface water shared by Jordan, Israel, Syria and the Palestinians, remains

another potentially explosive issue in final status talks.

Despite continued Jordanian-Israeli talks on water, no formal Jordanian-Palestinian or Israeli-Palestinian talks have taken place on this vital matter.

As for borders, Mr. Netanyahu insists on keeping under Israel's control — though not necessarily under its sovereignty — a "security strip" in the Jordan Valley to guarantee the Palestinian entity remains isolated from Jordan.

This, officials said, could pose problems in relation to defining Jordan's future borders with the

Palestinian state as the Kingdom refuses to recognise Israel's control of the West Bank's frontiers with Jordan because it considers them as boundaries with the Palestinians.

While the ambiguity clouding these final status issues has served the interests of Jordanians and Israelis by keeping options open, analysts say clarity is required in order for them to comprehensively address these questions.

Since Israel is the strongest player in what politicians have termed the Jordan-Palestine-Israel triangle, its ability to manipulate both parties can be reduced, if co-operation between Jordan and the

Palestinian National Authority is enhanced.

"Unfortunately until now most of the Jordanian-Palestinian coordination occurs during periods of crisis," said the senior Jordanian official. "But once final status talks start, we must have effective cooperation."

Years of mistrust have not provided a conducive atmosphere for such coordination, some diplomats say.

"The fact that Jordan has to constantly reassure President Arafat that it supports the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and that it has no ulterior designs on the West

Bank, is an indication of how little trust exists," said a former official.

"It is like a husband constantly assuring his jealous wife that he is not cheating on her but she still won't completely believe him. It is time to set the record straight."

Unlike other bilateral Arab relations, Jordanian-Palestinian ties are a reflection of a unique experience interlinking history, demography, economic and geo-political interests.

All major previous attempts at reaching common understandings on a joint approach towards peace with Israel, including the Palestinian-Jordanian February 1985 agreement, failed.

In response to Arab and Palestinian demands, Jordan cut legal and administrative links with the West Bank.

Their agreement to form a joint delegation to attend the 1991 Madrid peace conference was the only serious attempt since the 1985 accord. But after two rounds of talks in Washington, the Palestinian side opted for a separation.

Their ties suffered a major setback with the shock to Jordan of learning that the PLO had reached its own interim peace deal with Israel during secret talks in Oslo that ran parallel to the Washington negotiations.

This, politicians say, encouraged Jordan to go ahead and sign its 1994 peace treaty with the Jewish state.

Suspicion between both continued even after the Palestine National Authority led by Mr. Arafat took over the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank.

The presence of a media office in Jordan for Hamas, the PNA's main rival, has remained another thorny issue in bilateral ties.

The writer is a Jordan Times reporter.

Home is where the heart is

Alia A. Toukan

WHEN ABU Tareq beard of the massacre in the Palestinian village of Abu Shusha in May 1948, he took his wife and three children and fled his home in Lqibab, making his way to Jericho until things settled down.

Fifty years later, he is still waiting to return. He is one of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian victims of the Nakbeh — the 1948 war that shattered the Palestinian people, with more than 400 Arab villages destroyed and some 700,000 refugees driven from 80 per cent of British-mandated Palestine which became Israel.

Like thousands of refugees, Abu Tareq and his family eventually found their way to Jordan and settled in temporary tents that evolved into ramshackle houses of concrete with corrugated tin roofs.

But for most, the 11 refugee camps scattered across Jordan will never be home as they live on the memory of going back one day, even though many of their villages have been erased from the map.

"I know that there is nothing to see since the village has been obliterated, but I still want to go back," says Abu Tareq, 75.

"For now, I have made Jordan my second home," he adds. "But there isn't a single day that passes by that I don't remember my village, my work place in the Lud train station, my house and my garden," he told the Jordan Times in a garage warehouse in the Hussein refugee camp in the heart of Amman, home to over 30,000 Palestinians

from the 1948 war.

Like most refugees, he still recollects memory of the night he left his village of Lqibab, and makes sure his children and grand children are raised on the memories of the Nakbeh.

"We had heard that the Jewish forces had entered the village of Abu Shusha and massacred all the armed men in the village, and took the old people and women and children to one of their settlements," recounts the frail Abu Tareq.

"The day after the massacre in Abu Shusha, the village elders in Lqibab decided that we should take our families and leave until things calmed down," he says. "That night, the Jews came and found only a handful of men waiting for them."

Fighting the Jewish group was not an option, he says. "There were only a few armed men in our village. The Jews were armed and organised. We knew what we were up against."

Many refugees in Jordan and elsewhere live with door keys and ownership documents for their houses that have been demolished by Israel long ago.

But Omar, Abu Tareq's son, sees things differently than his father. He says that he would like to feel that Jordan is his home.

"Apart from my parents' stories, I have no memories of Palestine. I grew up in Amman and would like to stay here," says the 34-year-old hairdresser.

However, he says, not everyone makes him feel accepted as a Jordanian citizen with full rights.

"I realise that Jordan has done all it can for us with

the limited resources it has, but I still don't feel that I am accepted."

Although most Palestinian refugees residing in Jordan and the West Bank have been politically assimilated and have been granted Jordanian passports, many claim that they are discriminated against.

Despite His Majesty King Hussein continued warning that anyone who discriminates between Jordanians, regardless of their origin, will be "my enemy for ever," many Palestinians say they still feel uneasy.

Memories triggered by the 1970-71 civil war between the army and PLO guerrillas still linger on in the back of their minds.

"I am lucky that my name is Ahmad Abu Tayeh. It sounds like a Jordanian name," says another Palestinian refugee in the Al Hussein camp.

He was referring to the name of one of the main tribes from southern Jordan.

"I know that it is not the state policy to discriminate against Palestinians, but many bureaucrats in the public sector still try to remind us on a daily basis that we don't belong here," says the 24-year-old.

Some 3.5 million Palestinian refugees and their families now live in squalid camps in the West Bank the Gaza Strip and in neighbouring Arab countries — over 1.4 of them in Jordan.

Water and electricity services in most camps in Jordan have improved over the years, but unemployment, a national problem, remains rampant, fluctuating between 15 and 22 per cent.

The refugees' fate is due

to be decided in negotiations for a permanent peace settlement between Israel and the Palestine National Authority (PNA) running Gaza and parts of the West Bank under an interim 1993 peace deal.

However, in the face of certain Israeli refusal to allow them to return, proposals have been floated for paying them compensation and settling them in countries where they currently reside.

But most refugees insist this is no solution.

"I will not accept compensation or to be settled here," Ahmad Kamel, a refugee in the sprawling Baqaa refugee camp near Amman told the Jordan Times. "That would mean giving up my rights in Palestine."

The Kingdom's official policy is that Israel must repatriate and/or compensate the refugees in line with U.N. Resolution 194, which stipulates that the refugees are full Jordanian citizens but can exercise their right to return which the U.N. granted them.

Jordan has taken part in the multilateral refugee talks set up after the launching of the Madrid Middle East Peace Process in 1991, which have shown little progress.

Until a solution is reached, the fate of many of Jordan's refugees will continue to hang in the balance as they go on asking the million dollar question: Where do I belong and when will I be able to return?

Palestinians and Jordanians: National unity vs Israeli designs

Salameh Ne'matt

IN 1971, Jordan's Cabinet Minister Qadri Toukan died in Beirut. His coffin was wrapped with the Jordanian flag before it was flown to Amman and from there to the King Hussein Bridge. At the bridge, the Jordanian flag was removed and replaced by the Palestinian flag before the body was carried across the Jordan River into the West Bank for burial at his birthplace, Nablus.

This and other similar stories speak volumes of the extent of the Palestinians' assimilation in Jordan on the one hand, and their bond to Palestine on the other. The Nablus-born Taher Masri, who served as prime minister of Jordan in 1991 and before it as foreign minister, was elected speaker of the Lower House of Parliament in 1993, while his brother, Maher Masri, was elected to the Palestine National Council around the same time. Maher was later appointed a member in the cabinet of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Depending on one's perspective, such examples are viewed differently. Hard-line Jordanian nationalists see in them a manifestation of dual loyalty whereas mainstream Transjordanians and Jordanians of Palestinian origin consider them an expression of national unity.

The problem is greatly exacerbated when Israel gets involved. A 1975 declaration by the Likud leader

and former Israeli Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, who is now Israel's infrastructure minister, still rings alarm bells in Jordan.

The "Jordan is Palestine" concept, which he was the first to articulate, has never been formally revoked by the rightist Likud leadership, although the Likud voted overwhelmingly in favour of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel in 1994.

When the current Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was deputy foreign minister during the Madrid Peace Conference he told journalists there that he did not see any difference between a Palestinian living in Nablus and another living in Irbid or Amman. He categorically rejected the notion of setting up a Palestinian state in the West Bank, saying that he did not see why Israel should agree to the establishment "two Palestinian states to the east of Israel." His public pronouncements since have been relatively toned down.

But the notion has never been dismissed altogether. When Mr. Netanyahu was asked recently about how he viewed the future after a permanent settlement, he told the questioner "Read my book. Jordanians who read my book, 'A Place Under The Sun,' found no reassurances on that front."

Even some relatively moderate Israeli leaders from the Labour Party recently appeared to be inching closer to the Likud view on Jordan. In a recent interview, Haim Ramon, a former interior minister and

a leading figure in the Labour Party said he no longer disagreed that Jordan will eventually become a Palestinian state.

While the majority of Jordanians and Palestinians view the Kingdom's more accommodating approach to Palestinians who took refuge in Jordan after the 1948 and 1967 wars as a sign of national unity and a manifestation of the regime's tolerance and openness, a few critics see it as a fulfilment of Israel's alleged plan to turn Jordan into a Palestine that would accommodate even more Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. A few of those even go to the extent of demanding that Palestinians in Jordan be treated like those in Lebanon, Syria and Egypt to prevent their assimilation and guarantee continued political pressure on Israel for their return.

Other Jordanian politicians, however, argue that the matter is too complex and multi-layered. They see two opposing forces now at work within the triangle of Jordanians, Palestinians and Israelis. The first force, controlled by Israel and assisted unwittingly by some Jordanian and Palestinian elements, is pushing in the direction of the Palestinianisation of Jordan and the possible fulfilment of the Jordan is Palestine option. The second force, divided and barely effective and plagued by Jordanian-Palestinian divisions, pushes for the Jordanisation of Palestinians, or what one

leading politician calls Jordanian identification with the Palestinian struggle.

As things stand, the first force seems to be dominant from a strategic perspective while the opposing force appears incapable of a coherent counter-strategy leaving the balance of power in favour of Israel with it is designs for the region.

Throughout the 50 years of Israel's establishment on Palestinian land, Israeli governments have worked hard to deprive the Palestinians of their pan-Arab strategic depth. In recent years, Israel has succeeded in dividing each and everyone of their peace interlocutors on the Arab side. A joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to peace talks in Washington broke up into two delegations after two rounds of talks. An earlier proposal for a joint Arab delegation for talks with Israel based on U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 was summarily dismissed by the Israelis even before the talks started.

Today's relations between Israel and the Arab World are almost completely isolated from what is happening on the Palestinian-Israeli front. The so-called pan-Arab strategic depth, which the Palestinians once thought was their guarantor for liberation, is no longer there.

The writer is the BBC and Al Hayat correspondent in Amman.

Society on the move

Bringing back fond memories

THEY THOUGHT they had been forgotten. But on Tuesday evening 50 pioneer educationists meeting the minimum age requirement of 75 were honoured by their younger colleagues Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali at a ceremony organised by the Society of Educationists and the Ministry of Education and hosted by Al Ahliyah Amman University. Dr. Majali, himself a former president of the University of Jordan, listened along with the honourees and their families to tributes made by Ahliyah University President Amin Mahajneh (a former minister of culture under a previous Majali government) and by University of Jordan Vice president Sami Khasawneh, who is president of the Society of Educationists. But the Basha himself said he would be moved to tears if he were to address the gathering and so went directly to each person being honoured to shake his/her hand and present each with a memento. As a sprightly 95, teacher and historian, Rox Bin Zayad al Zeidi, who still writes a weekly column in Al Rai, hugged the premier thanking him and all concerned for remembering those who served in the Ministry of Education during Jordan's earliest days. Emotions running high left not a dry eye in the place.



Some of Jordan's pioneers educationists attend a ceremony in their honour Tuesday at Al Ahliyah Amman University

GREAT TO BE BACK: In the Kingdom once again, on a personal visit, is Sir John Coles, former British ambassador to Jordan and former head of the Diplomatic Service. Sir John, who arrived in Amman after a visit to Israel where he participated in a conference at Ben Gurion University, served as ambassador here from 1984-1988. Now retired from the foreign service, he will begin a fellowship at Oxford University where he plans to look into what he sees as a deficiency in policy planning. His goal is to eventually publish a book on the subject. Sir John made many friends during his Jordan tenure and was able to exchange news with some of them at a dinner hosted in his honour by British Ambassador Christopher Battiscombe and his wife Brigitte at their residence. At dinner were Minister of Culture and Youth Tatal Al Hassan and his wife Reema, Royal Jordanian President Nader Dahabi and his wife Aida, former Royal Court Chief Marwan Qassim and his wife Jayce, former Ambassador to the U.K. Albert Burros and his wife Kazi, Palestine Hospital founder Dr. Sami Khoury, Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery Director Dr. Daoud Hanania and his wife Nada, prominent businessman and a founder of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature Anis Muasher and his wife Louli, and syndicated columnist Rami Khouri. Remembering some of his experiences in Amman, Sir John told of the time when Dr. Hanania performed surgery on him and later, during a visit of their Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the doctor was thanked by the British premier for his good care of her envoy. Sir John, who returns to London today, said that since his departure as ambassador, he has visited 87 countries, and none is as dear to him as Jordan. "Crossing the Allenby (King Hussein) Bridge, receiving a warm 'Ahlam Wa Sahlan' and a cup of Arabic coffee from the Jordanian border police is always an endearing reminder of what Jordan has meant to me as well as so many of my colleagues," said Sir John.



European Delegation head in Amman Yves Gazzo and his wife Nicola welcome Ad Dustour Chief Editor Dr. Nabil Sharif to their Europe Day reception

NOW THAT'S UNION: Somehow it was no surprise that last Saturday's reception hosted by the head of the European Delegation in Amman Yves Gazzo and his wife Nicola to mark Europe Day would yield a huge turnout. It was a "standing room only" event which drew guests from all sectors and countries. The muggy weather seemed to keep no one away. Attending were former Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kaborit and his wife Futinu, Minister of

Planning Rima Khalaf, Huneidi and her husband Hani, Minister of Public Works Nasser Lawzi, Minister of Tourism Akel Biltaji and his wife Dr. Nawwaf, several ambassadors and heads of foreign NGOs, and of course chief editors of local dailies and weeklies.

MOVING MOSAIC: The wives of Arab diplomats in Washington are making their mark once again. They have formed what they call The Mosaic Foundation in order to bring the famous Lebanese Caracalla dance troupe to perform at Washington's Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The event is being held to raise money for the Arab children receiving medical treatment at St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. The Mosaic Foundation members asked American First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton to be the honorary chair of the foundation. Mrs. Clinton accepted and invited the members for coffee at White House last Monday. There, the diplomats' wives thanked Mrs. Clinton for her efforts and also thanked her for her televised statement in support of a Palestinian state which she made during the Seeds of Peace Conference in Geneva. The foundation members also presented her with a token gift. Ticket sales to the May 19 Caracalla performance and after-the-dinner dinner have raised \$500,000 for the humanitarian project. Among the foundation's members is Lynne Muasher, wife of Jordan's Ambassador in the U.S. Marwan Muasher.

rol. Its partners there are PASSIA and other NGOs there. Mr. Buhbe left Jordan for east Jerusalem late this week and will return to Germany today. He is expected back in Jerusalem to start work in early September.

PREPARE YOUR AUTOGRAPH BOOK: In Atlanta, Georgia, home of Ted Turner's Cable News Network, Mr. Turner and his wife, actress Jane Fonda, hosted a small reception following CNN's World Report annual conference last week. Their guest of honour was none other than British songwriter and vocalist Sir Elton John. And among the guests were none other than Ambassador Marwan Muasher and Jordan Information Bureau Director Rania Atalla. Ticked at how personable Sir Elton was, our diplomats invited the singer to Jordan to give a concert. We can't make promises, but we can report that he liked the idea and put the Jordanians in touch with his manager. What we don't know is whether another guest, PNA Minister of Higher Education Hannan Aslrawi, made Sir Elton a similar offer.



Piano instructor Marianna Islaieh and her students take a "curtain call" following their Friday recital

WORTH WATCHING: Still aspiring musicians here at home pin their fingers to the piano keyboard in what their instructor Marianna Islaieh calls a "dress rehearsal" for family and friends at Le Meridien Hotel last Friday. The students, ranging in age from 5 to 14-years-old, are planning to hold benefit performances to help the needy children of Jordan. These young performers will be hard at practice in Tchaikovsky, Gadeke, Beethoven, and Bach, so keep on eye out for their next recital.

Jennifer Hamarnesh

Mind your hard disk

By Jean-Claude Elias

A FEW years ago the average PC user would shop for a machine made by a reputable manufacturer and would make a decision based on the global characteristics of the computer. The processor's type and speed - i.e. 486, Pentium, clock rate, etc. - the amount of memory supplied and the size of the hard disk were the main features one would care about. But in the end, what most users are looking for is the overall performance of the system. This cannot be reached anymore by simply evaluating the global characteristics, or by relying on a brand name. Users have become more knowledgeable than before and have learnt to study technical details such as the refresh rate of monitors, the printing resolution of printers and so forth.

Apart from the main processor, the one single component inside a PC that deserves particular attention is the hard disk drive. I would even say that in many cases it is more important than the processor. This is where we store our precious work, whatever its format: text, sound, photos or other. Storing and accessing this data forces the disk to open and close files a large number of times per working session. The operating systems, the programmes and the applications that the vast majority of PC users are running are disk-intensive and not processor-intensive.

In addition to the first characteristic of a hard disk which is its capacity - how much data it can store - two figures should be taken into consideration: the access time and the transfer rate. This is not too technical at all and should be the

chip talk



concern of any user, whether amateur or professional. The access time indicates how fast the disk can find the file to open, while the transfer rate shows how much time it will take to actually open it, read it and transfer it to the programme (Word, Excel, etc.) supposed to use it. With the ever-increasing size of both the number of files on a system and their size, these two factors are becoming critical. A slow hard disk will handicap even the fastest Pentium. An access time of 10 ms (milliseconds) and a transfer rate of 16 MB/s (megabytes per second) are the minimum acceptable values with the new models of computers. High performance and very expensive SCSI drives claim access times as fast as 8 to 7 ms and transfer rates as high as 80 MB/s.

Seagate and Western Digital, the main manufacturers of hard drives for PCs are offering new, fast models to match the high-end Pentium II machines. Realising that SCSI models are too expensive for SOHO (small office - home office) users, they propose disks that rotate at high speed instead. Whereas standard units work at about 4,500 rpm, or revolutions per minute, the new disks work at 7,200 rpm. This feature alone allows a significant improvement in the overall performance of any PC without forcing you to break a bank.

Sparing a little effort - and a little money too - on an adequate hard disk is the best thing one can do to make the best out of a PC. Operating systems like Windows 95 and the ones to come will seem to crawl otherwise.

American arts festival: building bridges through talent

By Omar Karmi
Special to the Jordan Times

THE OFFICIAL agenda of the American Arts Festival which finished yesterday with a guitar and 'oud concert, was to foster "cultural exchange" between Arabs and Americans. An arts festival, according to the programme, was seen as an ideal vehicle for this, because of the role art plays in "promoting understanding between peoples" and "building bridges of cooperation and mutual understanding."

The festival featured sculptures by Samer Tabbaa of Jordan, jewellery by Suzanne Masri from Egypt, and music from Lebanese guitarist Jad Azkoul and Jordanian 'oudist Sakher Hatter. Perhaps the most graphic illustration of how "bridges are built," came from Salwa Nashashibi both in her lecture on Contemporary Arab Art in the U.S., and the slides she presented.

She discussed the "image problem" of Arab art in the U.S. - Westerners don't really know what it is, or how to classify it - and related the story of a friend of hers, who, after receiving rave reviews for an exhibition, was invited to hold one at a large gallery in Los Angeles. However, after the custodian discovered she was an Arab, she was politely told to "ring back later."

Another American museum custodian asked: "Contemporary Arab art? Does such a thing exist?"

Such perceptions are not exceptional in the U.S., according to Ms. Nashashibi, where the Arab stereotype is almost singularly negative.

But there is contemporary Arab art, and contemporary Arab art of very high quality, both in the fine arts and in the performing arts,

which was richly emphasised at this festival. Ms. Masri's jewellery expressed a rare symbiosis between Arab heritage and western modern art, and Mr. Azkoul, whose holistic approach to guitar playing, following the Uruguayan maestro Abel Carlevaro, is at the forefront of a movement which is breaking free of the technical constraints placed on it by greats such as Segovia and John Williams, to reappraise approaches to classical guitar.

Nevertheless, Ms. Nashashibi said, the stereotypes remain, and a major reason for this is sheer ignorance. "Forces of Change", an exhibition devoted to Arab women artists organised by the International Council for Women in the Arts of which Ms. Nashashibi was a founder, and which toured the United States from 1994-96, was thus a huge eye-opener for the American public.

The Washington Post was surprised at its "wholly unexpected feeling of creativity and freedom," and the Miami Herald acknowledged that it was a "window on an art and... a world that we know shockingly little about."

One visitor to the exhibit flew into a rage when confronted by one of the photographic images on Lebanese artist Rana Bishara's 101 installation, at what she saw as an Arab exhibition using images from the Holocaust. The image was actually from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Through exhibitions like "Forces of Change" this surprise at the existence of a competent Arab art world can be eradicated, but Arab governments have failed to realise the effect of public opinion on U.S. policy, and paid too little attention to



Jad Azkoul

"promoting Arabic culture abroad," Ms. Nashashibi charged.

However, the blame can perhaps not be put squarely on the shoulders of governments. Endemic in Arab culture, is an attitude that a career in art is not respectable enough, useful enough. Ms. Masri, who has a degree in engineering, was half-way through her masters degree before switching to fine arts, a move she didn't dare tell her family about until she had carved out a living for herself.

"Engineering," she explained, "was prestigious. Art was not."

Mr. Azkoul still fondly remembers his father's words when he first approached him about studying music: "It would be a crime to waste a degree, but a sin to waste a talent." He actually finished his masters in

psychology before dedicating himself to music (a fact which attests not only to his talent - coming so far after starting so late - but to the suspicion that there can be few places in the world with such well-educated artists as in the Arab World). Practising eight hours a day left his scars, and he went to see a neurologist for treatment of his worn-out muscles, only to receive the advice: "Stick to psychology. What we need in the Middle East is science, science, science!"

Talent is needed. And talent varies from individual to individual. This is what makes pursuing a career in art a risky undertaking, but it also emphasises the fact that art is an individual endeavour. It is finding a way, as Ms. Masri puts it (albeit in a slightly different context), "to materialise the impact nature or life has on you." Or as Mr. Azkoul puts it with respect to music: "The core of music lies in rhythm and sensuality, which is brought out by the musician." It is exactly this individualism which makes art an ideal tool with which to break down stereotypes.

Ms. Masri contends that it is the "duty of the craftsman to seek outside influences in order to expand as an artist." Add to that Ms. Nashashibi's claim that "the artist invariably carries with him his heritage and background," and it becomes easy to see why art is such a potent vehicle for "promoting understanding between peoples", and why to break down stereotypes, whether of Arabs or others, the practice of art in general, and the use of art as a means of cultural exchange in particular, should be fostered and encouraged.

Israeli planes kill 10 Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

Lebanon, where Syria is the main power broker.

Faith-Miftada calls for the destruction of Israel and vehemently opposes the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords signed by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

The Israeli army announced at dawn Wednesday that its warplanes had attacked "terrorist targets" in the Bekaa Valley at 1:15

a.m.

"Israeli air force planes attacked terrorist targets tonight in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon. The pilots reported accurate hits and all planes returned safely to base," an Israeli army spokesman said.

He provided no further details. The air raids came as the U.N. international committee monitoring the south Lebanon ceasefire met to discuss violations by both Lebanese guerrillas and

Israel and its allied militia.

The committee found fault with both sides in its examination of five Israeli and three Lebanese complaints of violations of a 1996 truce and said in a statement: "The highest priority must be given to the protection of civilians." The Israeli raids also came after two Israeli soldiers were wounded by mortar shelling by Hizbollah guerrillas Monday night on the Lebanese-Israeli border.

India conducts two more nuclear tests

(Continued from page 1)

approved by the United Nations in 1996, saying it froze the advantage held by nations like the United States and France that had already tested and refined sophisticated nuclear weapons. Now the government has indicated that India was prepared to reopen talks on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, but this time as a nuclear state.

Wednesday's tests were fully

contained with no release of radioactivity into the atmosphere," the statement said. Both explosions, which were conducted at 06:51 GMT, were measured at less than 1 kiloton, it said. They were much smaller than Monday's three explosions, which international monitors estimated at a total of 10 kilotons. The bomb the United States dropped on Hiroshima was 15 kilotons. Near the test site, a desert range 550 km

southwest of New Delhi, villagers who thought Monday's tests were an earthquake said Wednesday's were barely noticeable.

"We felt a slight jolt in the afternoon but it was very little compared to what happened two days ago," said Lakshman Singh Suthar, headman of Chacha village five km from the test site.

India's first nuclear test, 24 years ago, was conducted at the same range.

Jordan, Syria resume water talks

(Continued from page 1)

Jordanian officials say the water-thirsty Kingdom is expected to get an 85 million cubic metres (MCM) of water per year from the river once the dam is built.

Jordan has often complained it was only getting a fraction of its water share because Syria had set up several sand ditches along its path to store water before it reaches Jordan. "We have an interest in the Wihdeh Dam and we intend to build it," a senior Jordanian official

told the Jordan Times on Wednesday. "But we are seeking how to finance the project, including its feasibility," he added. "We are trying to do something with the Syrians." Israel agreed to give Jordan over 200 million cubic metres of water annually, mostly from the Yarmouk River under a peace deal it signed with the Kingdom in 1994. The Water Ministry estimates that the water deficit in Jordan for all uses will grow from about 222 MCM in 1995 to 251 MCM by the year 2011.

Daily

Swedish Film Institute

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Declining interest rate on dinar seen behind rise in foreign currency deposits

ACCORDING TO the latest Monthly Statistical Bulletin issued by the Central Bank of Jordan, the dinar-denominated deposits have declined from JD4.36 million in 1997 to JD4.23 million at the end of February 1998. This three per cent drop compares with an 11 per cent increase in dinar-denominated deposits during last year.

During the past years, the deposits in Jordanian dinars were constantly rising as a result of high interest rates which were used as a monetary weapon to make the dinar more attractive for savings and investments. As the interest on dinar deposits were lowered, deposits in foreign currencies have increased by two per cent from the equivalent of JD2.39 million in 1997 to the equivalent of JD2.45 million at the end of February 1998. JD2.37 million of the amount were deposits at the licensed banks.

Edward Far, advisor at the British Bank, attributed the shift to the drop in interest rate on the dinar. He explained that the interest margin between the dinar and the dollar has narrowed from 4.5 per cent last year to three per cent during the early months of 1998. Mr. Far cautioned that if the trend towards foreign currency deposits continues during the year, it would be a risky path running contrary to the monetary policy which aims at making the dinar more attractive.

Fakhri Bilbeisi, advisor at Philadelphia Investment Bank, saw the trend towards foreign currency deposits as being the result of doubts because of rising risks, especially with the increase in Jordan's debts which exceed \$7.5 billion. Fears

about economic growth slowing was also seen by Mr. Bilbeisi as a factor for switching away from dinar deposits.

Mr. Bilbeisi expressed great concern over the dinar's strength and the Jordanian reserves if the Palestinians resort to issue a Palestinian currency. He indicated that around JD500 million and \$700 million are estimated to be the size of dinars and dollars in the Palestinian market. "This represents half of the reserves," he said.

Statistics also show that dinar deposits in the Palestinian areas have dropped by around four per cent, from JD510.5 million in 1997 to JD491 million at the end of February 1998. At the same time, foreign currency deposits rose by 2.2 per cent, from the equivalent of JD899.1 million to the equivalent of JD918.5 million. Of the amount, the equivalent of JD555.4 million are in U.S. dollars.

The advisor of the Philadelphia Investment Bank concluded by indicating that the foreign currency liberalisation policy adopted by the Central Bank since the second half of last year has contributed to the decline in interest on the dinar and the activation in foreign currency dealings.

Jordan National Bank Chairman Rajae Muasher said that demand for foreign currency loans is better than the demand for dinar credits although the latter is still higher. He attributed this to the need of businesses to finance their projects in foreign currencies especially in light of the foreign exchange liberalisation and the low interest rate (Al Arab Al Yawm).

Bahrain's aluminium company to borrow \$400m

MANAMA (AFP) — Bahrain's national aluminium company Alba, the world's second largest producer, is set to borrow \$400 million for three development projects, its finance director said Wednesday.

Alba will sign an eight-year loan with a consortium of six banks within the next two months to fund a \$250 million coke fuel plant, a desalination plant and development of its marine terminal, Ahmed Saleh Al Nouaimi told Al Ayyam newspaper.

The coke plant, to be built by Germany's Mannesmann KTI, will be completed in 2000 and will enable Alba to produce 450,000 tonnes of coke a year, of which 200,000 tonnes will be exported.

Coke, the substance that remains after coal is heated and the gas and tar is removed, is used mainly for heating furnaces.

The loan will also fund construction of a desalination plant and loading dock for the export of aluminium, both to be built by Mannesmann under a contract signed in December.

English-Arabic business daily to publish within two months

By Mohammad Ben Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A first of its kind dual format English and Arabic daily newsletter is expected to hit the stands within the next two months following the government's approval in early April.

Mustafa Abu Lebdeh, the newsletter's founder, said Wednesday.

The newsletter, slated to be named "Business Day"

in English and "Al Yaoumiya" in Arabic, will concentrate on providing economic and business news and features primarily aimed at the business executive community. Mr. Abu Lebdeh said.

"The newsletter will focus on political as well as economic news and analysis and features along with current events," he added.

Recent studies have shown that the daily news-

paper circulation in the Kingdom has actually declined over the past two years due to the increase in the newsstand prices, forced by escalating costs of newsprint on the international market and high local taxes.

However, Mr. Abu Lebdeh said he was confident that his newsletter would carve out a market niche by prompt and accurate reporting targeting spe-

cific markets.

"We are still working on the outlook of the newsletter, such as number of pages, staff and price," Mr. Abu Lebdeh said, stressing that the project was still in a preparatory phase.

Mr. Abu Lebdeh, formerly chief editor of the Kuwaiti Arabic daily Al Siaseh, founded Al Aswaq in 1991 and currently works as Al Aswaq chief editor.

UAE urged to allow foreign investment in stocks

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) should open its stock market to foreign investors to activate dealing and reverse a steady capital flight, officials and dealers have said.

"I believe expatriates should be given access to the market when it is opened," Central Bank Governor Sultan Al Suwaidi told Al Khaleej daily.

"We are in an age of openness and foreign investment in our stocks will expand the market and attract capital ... But I prefer that expatriates should not be permitted to own the shares of all companies in the country," he said.

Foreigners, who far outnumber locals in the UAE, are not allowed to deal in local shares

while investment in other sectors must include a minimum 51 per cent national partnership.

Such restrictions have combined with a high government ownership in trading institutions and a tendency for long-term investment to smother share-trading in the UAE, which has no official stock exchange.

But officials said last year they would consider giving limited access to expatriates when a formal floor is finally commissioned.

"I support calls for opening channels to expatriates to invest their funds instead of transferring them abroad," said Mohammad Al Abbar, director general of the Dubai

Economic Development Department.

"I wonder why some refuse the principle of foreign participation in local companies at a time when the world is heading for openness ... I believe that foreign investment is a positive element for any economy," he added.

Bankers said Asians and other foreign communities in the UAE siphon out more than half their monthly income in the absence of investment opportunities.

UAE nationals themselves also invest large funds abroad as they are scared off by alleged insider-trading and other malpractices in the unofficial stock market.

Dealers said opening the

stock market to foreigners would ease the capital flight as return from shares is among the highest in the Arab World.

They noted a rush by expatriates to buy shares in the UAE's first investment fund to open for expatriates.

It was launched by the Dubai-based Emirates Bank International last year and bankers said authorities were studying allowing other banks to set up similar portfolios.

"I believe allowing expatriates to own a percentage of the shares will enrich the stock market, bring additional funds and experience, and add depth to the market when it starts operation," stockbroker Zuhair Kaswani said.

The UAE has the third biggest stock market in the region after those in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, with its market capitalisation exceeding 100 billion dirhams (\$27.2 billion) at the end of March.

Paid-up capital of the nearly 40 trading banks and firms stood at around 14 billion dirhams (\$3.8 billion).

But turnover, the value of traded shares, has remained among the lowest in the region, not exceeding \$1 billion a year.

Bahrain and Oman are the only Arab Gulf states to permit limited share ownership for foreigners while Qatar's burgeoning bourse has said it is considering following suit.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7781	0.6132	1.4797	134.11	1.4437	1753.50	2.0032	5.6260
DE Mark	0.5624	1.0000	0.3446	0.8321	76.43	0.8118	986.94	1.1269	3.3538
GB Sterling	1.6306	2.9000	1.0000	2.4123	218.75	2.3544	2899.61	3.2668	9.7228
CH Franc	0.6758	1.2009	0.4140	1.0000	90.89	0.9763	1184.64	1.3533	4.0278
JP Yen	0.0075	1.3254	0.4588	1.1026	1.0000	1.0761	13.07	148.35	4.4439
CA Dollar	0.6927	1.2916	0.4225	1.0656	71.06	1.0000	1270.80	1.4591	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0138	0.3494	0.8844	1308.24	0.8231	1.0000	11.42	3.3991
NL Guilder	0.4992	0.8868	0.3068	0.7385	66.89	0.7203	874.87	1.0000	2.9746
FR Franc	0.1677	0.2981	0.1027	0.2486	22.47	0.2420	33.59	0.2500	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7505	0.3770	3.6405	0.3055	3.6728	1612.70	3.4160
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2898	0.5317	5.1347	0.4309	5.1803	2133.67	4.8161
Saudi Riyal	0.2668	0.1890	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0815	0.98	403.33	0.9108
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8806	9.9483	1.0000	9.66	0.8103	9.74	4012.47	9.0610
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0302	1.0302	1.0000	0.0839	1.01	415.62	0.9383
Kuwait Dinar	0.2733	0.2308	1.2756	1.2340	11.92	1.0000	1.02	405.83	0.9383
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0126	0.9912	0.0832	1.00	411.57	0.9301
Lebanese L1000	0.68	0.4687	2.4783	0.2432	2.4068	0.2020	2.4280	12.2582	2.2582
Egyptian	0.2327	0.2076	1.0979	0.1104	1.0657	0.0894	1.0752	442.83	1.0000

Energy				
Oil	Last	Revised	Oil	Last
Brent	14.24	14.24	WTI	14.24
WTI	14.88	15.17	Brent	14.24
Brent	14.24	14.24	Dubai	13.81
Dubai	13.81	13.19	UL Gas	189.00

Metal Prices				
Metal	Bid	Offer	Metal	Bid
Gold (oz's)	298.2	298.7	Silver (oz's)	8.52
Silver (oz's)	8.52	8.55	Platinum (oz's)	403
Platinum (oz's)	403	406	AL (3 Months)	1385
AL (3 Months)	1385	1387	CU (3 Months)	1743
CU (3 Months)	1743	1745	Zinc (3 Months)	1080
Zinc (3 Months)	1080	1081	Lead (3 Months)	545
Lead (3 Months)	545	548	NI (3 Months)	4970

Main Equity Indices						
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	9185.4	33.63	0.37	9221.08	9157.03
New York	S&P 500	1118.44	2.65	0.24	1121.81	1114.93
London	FT-SE 100	5972.9	18.2	0.32	6000.2	5945.5
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	18343.81	21.33	0.14	18343.81	18322.6
Paris	CAC 40	4018.76	32.43	0.81	4045.77	4007.66
Frankfurt	DAX	6378.88	79.53	1.5	6389.32	6321.33

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET									
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDANIA									
TELEPHONE: 60171 / 60179									
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 13/05/1998									
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
BANK SECTOR TOTALS									
355,500	170,000	ARAB BANK	16.3	1.01	162	4580	910993	194.00	199.00
2,340	1,620	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.9	4.09	21	26900	45692	1.67	1.71
3,540	1,250	BANK OF JORDAN	4.2	0.00	6	926	1212	1.32	1.32
1,300	1,300	WID. EAST. INT. BK.	65.0	0.05	10	3221	3173	1.98	1.99
2,680	1,600	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.2	8.81	5	1500	2409	3.60	3.60
1,160	4,700	THE HOUSING BK.	19.8	0.20	138	52516	227464	6.15	6.25
4,180	1,790	JOR. KINART BANK	4.9	3.50	3	75000	51240	4.66	4.69
920	590	JOR. CIVIL BANK	4.1	0.00	22	3500	494	1.97	1.97
4,020	1,740	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	18.6	0.00	8	2950	5362	1.83	1.82
2,900	1,790	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	32.3	6.25	1	50	80	1.55	1.60
1,400	600	SEI-AI-YAL (JORDIA)	4.4	0.00	3	1250	1225	1.91	1.90
BANK SECTOR TOTALS									
2,400	1,590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	6.1	11.36	1	50	110	2.17	2.20
4,590	2,100	PHILADELPHIA INSUR.	10.1	0.00	1	9000	18900	2.10	2.10
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS									
2,240	1,620	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.9	5.29	5	359	731	2.03	2.04
6,100	3,550	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	14.3	4.30	1	200	930	4.89	4.85
1,550	970	NATL. PORTFOLIO	44.3	0.00	30	23700	26187	1.09	1.11
1,120	800	REAL ESTATE PWR.	16.6	0.00	4	2750	2358	1.37	1.39
5,990	330	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	9.9	0.00	12	14270	5447	3.37	3.39
9,500	6,700	ALRAJ	6.8	6.96	1	50	431	8.50	8.62
1,480	2,060	HID. EAST HOTELS	9.9	0.00	3	12500	13500	1.10	1.08
4,600	2,800	ARAB INTL. FID. EDUC.	9.9	2.00	4	3800	15700	4.00	4.02
1,090	900	ZARQA EDUCATION	16.2	0.00	1	1000	920	1.93	1.92
1,830	1,490	UNIFIED CO.	6.7	7.28	9	2100	3165	1.50	1.51
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS									
4,450	2,450	JOR. CENTRAL FACT.	15.4	4.23	22	12125	31597	2.61	2.60
12,250	9,270	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.1	8.56	7	1785	18492	10.35	10.38
1,470	1,040	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	10.8	7.35	1	100	136	1.35	1.36
2,070	1,000	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	9.0	0.20	4	1400	1680	1.22	1.20
5,620	5,800	ARAB YIN. INVEST.	8.3	3.17	12	3350	31385	6.15	6.30
5,740	3,560	ARAB PAPER. MANF.	14.7	3.75	126	57050	306978	5.26	5.34
1,420	750	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	9.0	0.00	1	500	400	1.81	1.80
6,350	4,450	ARAB ALUM. IND. INV.	7.0	6.03	6	1250	7250	5.70	5.80
5,70	400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	15.9	0.00	20	25650	12050	4.47	4.47
620	510	NATIONAL IRCS	9.0	0.00	5	2450	1274	1.52	1.52
760	370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9.0	0.00	20	3250	1333	1.41	1.41
3,000	520	NATL. CABLE WIRE. NPAC	27.0	0.00	19	5600	6369	1.15	1.12
730	530	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM.	11.4	0.00	5	5050	3035	1.60	1.60
1,560	1,150	ARAB PAPER. CHEM.	15.2	4.35	34	26450	36296	1.32	1.38
1,540	810	UNIV. MED. IND.	14.0	6.62	16	5640	4962	1.88	1.88
1,600	1,320	WAT. SUPPLY	9.3	7.52	4	530	354	1.32	1.33
1,080	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	12.1	11.63	4	2750	2365	1.37	1.39
1,660	1,290	EL-YAY READY WEAR	48.9	0.00	11	4950	6856	1.36	1.39
1,310	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	7.2	5.65	7	10650	13270	1.25	1.24
860	660	JORDAN STEEL	8.5	9.21	13	11850	8941	7.5	7.6
690	570	HID. EAST COMPLEX	10.7	0.00	21	62000	36580	1.59	1.59
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS									
104,30	104,30	INDEX	104.30	104.30	340	246380	533758		
GRAND TOTAL									
179,95	179,95	INDEX	179.95	179.95	792	486252	1971067		
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 13/05/1998									
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
1,050	910	EXPORT & FID. BKT. 751	17.0	0.00	22	7750	5193	1.91	1.92
620	480	WACE. EXP. REPT. JOM.	28.0	0.00	1	350	128	1.31	1.31
530	340	JOR. TRADE PACT.	9.0	0.00	20	25000	10970	0.43	0.44
620	360	ARAB FID. INVEST.	9.0	0.00	11	10000	5193	0.41	0.41
36,000	1,000	JOR. TOURIST TRAVEL CO.	24.6	0.00	2	7272	7272	1.00	1.00
1,220	1,050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	9.0	0.00	3	10250	14870	1.47	1.46
2,40	470	ARAB FID. INVEST.	39.3	0.00	10	3870	1870	0.48	0.48
650	360	NATL. MULT. ENT. SMICO	9.0	0.00	53	116400	52380	0.45	0.45
690	580	HIGHEST PHARM. 901	9.0	0.00	3	4000	2030	0.60	0.61
730	550	RAJ. PHARM. CO.	9.0	0.00	10	15650	15650	0.45	0.45
430	240	INDS. ENG.	9.0	0.00	1	400	12	0.66	0.67
830	470	INDS. CHEMICAL	13.4	0.00	2	2350	1195	0.50	0.51
980	590	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9.0	0.00	10	5140	5140	0.63	0.63
710	430	NATL. POULTRY	9.0	0.00	22	145000	75403	0.52	0.53
950	470	OPTICAL WEARING 751	9.0	0.00	3	1900	689	0.61	0.62
1,310	1,000	PHARM. P	9.0	0.00	14	11000	11850	0.60	1.00
1,000	780	REAL ESTATE CO. 751	13.2	9.47	6	3000	1653	0.81	0.80
GRAND TOTAL									
176	176	INDEX	176	176	276	405222	215066		
? : Stock 12 months high									
* : New dividend during the past 12 months									
- : Listed during the past 12 months									
P/E ratio is 100 or more									
+ : Negative P/E									
X : Earnings is zero or N/A for the most recent year									

Lakers and Jazz advance to NBA showdown

SEATTLE. Washington (AFP) — Shaquille O'Neal and the Los Angeles Lakers are on a collision course with Karl Malone and the Utah Jazz for a berth in the National Basketball Association Finals.

The youthful Lakers beat Seattle 110-95 and host Utah beat San Antonio 87-77 Tuesday, giving both winners a 4-1 triumph in their best-of-seven series and setting up a showdown for the Western Conference title.

The Jazz, in the Western finals for the third year in a row, ousted the Lakers from last year's playoffs but the Lakers beat Utah in three of four meetings this season.

"They're a great team. They took care of us last year," O'Neal said. "They're hungry. But if we play smart, we can take care of them too."

The Lakers, who had not advanced past the second round since 1991, open the best-of-seven matchup with the Jazz on Saturday in Utah.

"It's going to be a tough series," Lakers guard Nick Van Exel said. "They knocked us out last season. We want some revenge."

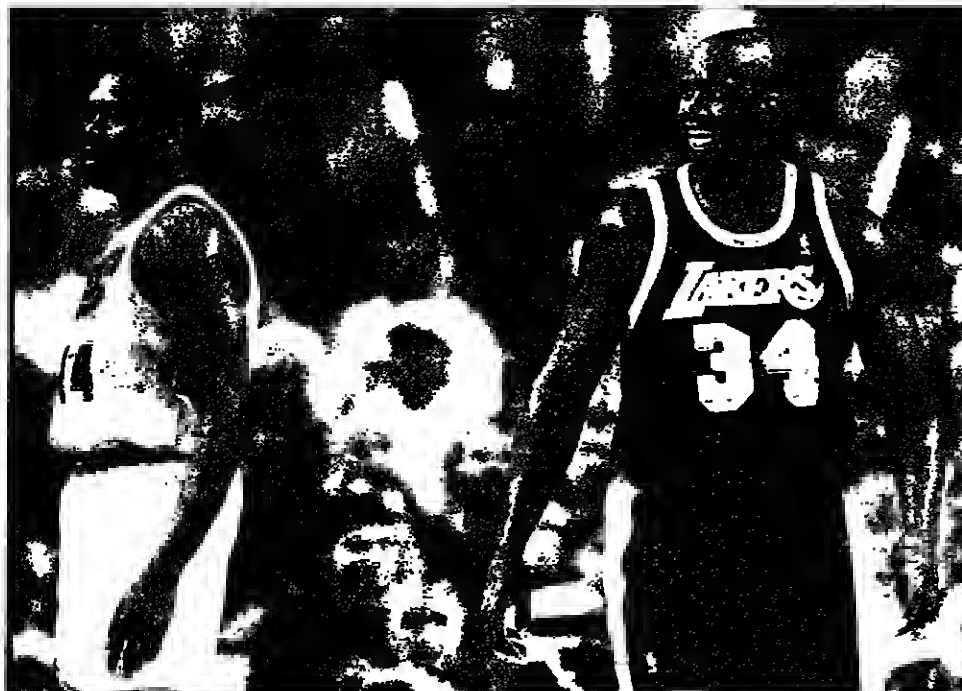
Karl Malone scored 24 points and pulled down 13 rebounds to lead Utah past the Spurs, who never led in the final two games of the series.

"It's a great accomplishment but the journey is far from over," Malone said, recalling how the Jazz fell to Chicago in six games last season in the club's first trip to the NBA Finals.

O'Neal overwhelmed Seattle in the deciding game with 31 points, nine rebounds and eight blocked shots, a playoff career high.

"We knew what was at stake. We knew if we took care of 'business it was over," O'Neal said. "We didn't want to give them any life. We just wanted to come up here and play smart. I have said all year if we play smart we can play with anyone. We played with a lot of enthusiasm."

The Lakers stunned Seattle by hitting 60 per cent of their shots from the field and matching a team



Seattle SuperSonics' Sam Perkins (L) walks away after Los Angeles Lakers' Shaquille O'Neal (R) slam-dunked the ball against him during the first quarter of their Western Conference Semifinal playoff game in Seattle 12 May. The Lakers lead the best-of-seven series 3-1 (AFP photo)

The Bulls lead Charlotte 3-1 while the Pacers own the same margin over New York.

Only six times in NBA history has a club rallied from a 3-1 deficit to win a playoff series.

"We know what we have to do," New York coach Jeff Van Gundy said. "We just have to be good enough to do it."

Indiana coach Larry Bird was named the NBA Coach of the Year on Tuesday. Only four times has that coach gone on to win a title, with Phil Jackson of Chicago in 1996 the only man to do it in the past 26 years.

"If we don't win a championship, I will feel we failed because we have the talent to do it," Bird said.

The Jazz proved it has the talent. Utah matched the Bulls for the best record in the NBA regular season at 62-20 and won home-court advantage throughout the playoffs by winning both their games against Chicago.

Utah shut down San Antonio's offense, holding the Spurs to 38 percent shooting for the game. The Spurs missed 10-of-11 three-point shots in losing

here for the 10th time in a row.

"I like the way the guys finished off. We finished off well," Malone said. "It was a hard fought victory. We worked our butts off. You have to stay involved the whole time, play our game, pound it inside and stay focused. Everybody did something at some point to help us win. It's great to see that."

Malone said he was happy for three days of rest before facing the Lakers. "The Mailman" even made a reference to O'Neal and his Superman logo tattoo.

"Even Superman needs a break every now and then," Malone said. "I'm not calling myself Superman and saying I'm going to get a tattoo, but I'm saying everybody needs a break."

San Antonio's David Robinson scored 21 points and pulled down 13 rebounds but missed 11 of his 15 shots. NBA Rookie of the Year Tim Duncan had 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Spurs despite a sore left ankle.

"It's frustrating," Robinson said. "We've been through this a couple of times. It gets old quick."

Baggio linked with Arsenal

ROME (AFP) — English champions Arsenal want to bring Italian hero Roberto Baggio to Highbury next season, it was claimed here on Wednesday.

Baggio, who has scored 20 goals this season with Bologna and is still hoping to make Italy's World Cup squad, has been chosen by coach Arsene Wenger as the alternative to Dennis Bergkamp, the Corriere dello Sport said.

Arsenal are not planning to part with their Dutch ace, but Wenger wants to strengthen a squad that next season faces a potentially gruelling Champions League campaign on top of their domestic league and cup commitments.

Bergkamp, voted Footballer of the Year in England, missed the Gunners' last three games of the season with a hamstring injury, and is still doubtful for this Saturday's FA Cup final against Newcastle United.

However, Baggio's arrival in north London could become complicated by the financial aspects of the deal, the Corriere added.

Baggio's entourage put the Arsenal offer at 2.75 million pounds, while Bologna officials claim it is four million pounds. Italy's star of the 1994 World Cup finals meanwhile earns around one million pounds a year in the Serie A and might ask as much as double that for the Premiership.

Should the negotiations break down,

the Corriere claimed, Arsenal already have their eyes on another gifted hall player for next season — Inter Milan's Nigerian Olympic champion Nwankwo Kanu.

Kanu has made a miraculous recovery from surgery to correct a heart defect, but the sheer abundance of strikers at the Italian club prompted president Massimo Moratti this week to say he would be willing to loan the Nigerian.

Arsenal, though, would only be interested in a definitive transfer of the 21-year-old.

Whatever happens, the most likely Serie A export to London next season will be Lazio striker Pierluigi Casiraghi, whose widely expected move to Chelsea is now due to be completed within the week.

Casiraghi will join fellow Italians Gianfranco Zola, Roberto Di Matteo, who he played with at Lazio, and player/coach Gianluca Vialli at Stamford Bridge.

European Cup final may be switched

NYON, Switzerland (AFP) — The European Cup final between Juventus of Italy and Real Madrid of Spain could be switched from Amsterdam because of inadequate transport arrangements, UEFA said Tuesday.

The match is scheduled for May 20, but both clubs involved have requested it be played over two legs in Turin and Madrid. UEFA, football's European governing body, said it had rejected this proposal.

The problems revolve around the departure and landing rights for charter flights that will carry supporters of the two teams to Amsterdam.

The Royal Dutch Football Association, the organisers of the match, have been unable to confirm whether charters will be allowed to land at Schiphol and there also are no guarantees they will be able to take off after the game because of local regulations.

Franz Beckenbauer introduces the World Cup to Jordan Times and Al Rai' readers

Franz Beckenbauer (the "Kaiser") is by far the most successful footballer in the history of German football. Long-time undisputed captain of Bayern Munich and of the West German national team, he was the first German player to achieve 100 caps for his country.

His record of 103 international appearances has only recently been overtaken by the current national team captain, Lothar Matthaus. Beckenbauer could have gone on to be the world's most capped player had he not left his club and Germany to continue his career in the United States.

To the spectator, Beckenbauer's ball play seemed lazy, almost arrogant and overbearing. He never gave the impression of having to exert himself or work for the ball. He commented later: "I have never regarded football as a job of work. My idea of work is something completely different."

His playing ability allowed him, in spite of his central defensive position, to avoid man-to-man confrontations, but the "goalkeeper on the ball" could also fight hard if necessary, and urge on his team-mates.

Idolized by German fans, Beckenbauer was unquestionably the greatest "libero" of all time. He virtually invented the "free man" position in defence, sweeping forward with panache to become at once a midfielder or even an attacker. No "libero" since then has been able to escape comparison with the way Beckenbauer interpreted the position.

His list of successes with Bayern Munich is impressive: Four Bundesliga (Federal German League) championship titles, four times West German Cup winner, three times winner of the European Champions Cup, once winner of the European Cup Winners Cup and one-time winner of the World Cup Cup championships, played between the European and South American championships.

But the list of honours does not end there: runner-up with the West German team in the 1966 World Cup, European Champions Cup winner in 1972, third place in

the 1970s World Cup and World Cup winner in 1974. In his subsequent career as a trainer of the German national team, Beckenbauer continued the outstanding track record of successes which started when he was a player, reaching the World Cup final in 1986, the semi-finals of the European Championship in 1988 and becoming World Champions in 1990.

Franz Beckenbauer is the father of three sons. Since 1982 his main domicile has been Kitzbühel, in Austria. Apart from his great love of football, Beckenbauer has been an avid golfer for some years.

Since 1992 he has occupied one of the posts as vice-president of FC Bayern Munich. He took over as interim coach of the club with effect from January 1993. Although Beckenbauer enjoyed a spell as trainer of the French team Olympique Marseilles following the 1990 World Cup, it is the first time he has trained a Bundesliga club side. Since 1991, he has been President of FC Bayern Munich.

Beckenbauer's monthly columns, in which he offers his opinions and analyses of German and European football, are published worldwide and are distributed by Global Media Services — gms, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the German Press Agency dpa.

Look for Beckenbauer's World Cup quizzes and team previews in the Jordan Times and its sister Arabic Daily Al Rai' starting May 16.



Kluivert gets chance to put torrid years behind him

PARIS (AFP) — Dutch striker Patrick Kluivert has had a torrid two years — the wrong headlines for all the making reasons.

The 22-year-old AC Milan players was found guilty last year of manslaughter and sentenced to 240 hours of community service for killing someone in a car crash.

Then the Dutch striker was accused of rape and risked being in prison when the World Cup gets under way this June.

But a Dutch appeal court ruled in February that there were no grounds to pursue

rape charges brought by a 20-year-old woman and they were dropped.

Finally Kluivert could turn his mind to action on the field.

In March he scored twice to earn AC Milan a 2-2 draw at Parma and a place in the Italian Cup final. It also underlined the fact that Holland possess one of the strongest strike forces in the World Cup.

Kluivert is a classic example of the famous Ajax youth programme. His fame was sealed when he scored the winning goal for Ajax in the 1995 Champions League

Final. But as his personal life began to unravel, he came under so much pressure from the Dutch press and public that after only three years with Ajax he needed a change of country.

Looking first at England, he finally decided to move to Italy and Milan in 1997.

But like many foreign imports, he has found it hard to make his mark with the Italian giants.

However with Dennis Bergkamp alongside him, Holland's Group E rivals Belgium, South Korea and Mexico could be in for a battering.

Shearer: England's indestructible deadly weapon

PARIS (AFP) — England captain Alan Shearer, the deadliest striker of his generation and a favourite to win the Golden Boot award in the 1998 World Cup finals, is not bashful about his international ambitions.

"I want to win 100 caps and to become England's top scorer," says the Newcastle hitman. "By the time I hang my boots up at 35 or 36 I want to be able to look back and say I gave everything, wanted to play every game and tried my best in every game."

Shearer's famous powers of determination and mental strength have helped him overcome a string of career-threatening injuries and a goal drought that might have destroyed the confidence of a lesser character.

The ankle ligament damage which ruled him out for six months of the current season was the fourth serious injury to affect his career in the last four years.

There were fears that he may not be fit to make the finals in France or that his return to action would be too late for him to get match-fit again.

But once again, the most expensive player in British football history proved his critics wrong by returning to action ahead of schedule in January after putting himself through an exhaustive recovery programme.

The same mental resilience also helped him overcome the intense pressure created by his inexplicable failure to score for England over a 13-game, 20-month period between September 1995 and June 1996 — a drought which has restricted his overall goal tally to 16 goals in 34 games. Since rediscovering his scoring touch with a thumping shot

into the roof of the Swiss net in England's 1-1 draw, Shearer has repaid the faith put in him with a string of commanding performances. The 27-year-old Geordie has led from the front since being named England captain by new coach Glenn Hoddle at the start of the World Cup campaign in September.

Shearer began his career at Southampton and made his debut before Kenny Dalglish took him to Blackburn Rovers where he scored over 30 league goals in three consecutive seasons, helping the club win its first league title for 81 years in 1995. In July 1996 he became the world's most expensive player at the time when he returned to his home town club of Newcastle for £15 million.

But he is a born leader. Prior to moving to the States he played for Santa Marta, Millionarios and Atletico Nacional in Colombia, French side Montpellier, Valladolid in Spain and then moved home again for further spells with Atletico Nacional and Atletico Junior before joining the Tampa Bay Mutiny and now Miami.

His past may yet catch up with him as the French tax department are reportedly eager to interview him over taxes allegedly not paid during his time with Montpellier.

Colombia will clearly miss the two-time South American Player of the Year when he retires, but Valderrama says no player is irreplaceable. "There are a lot of good players who can replace me," he says modestly.

His finishing, however, is less impressive and he has scored only 10 times as international level.

His style of play has allowed him to prolong his career. Never one to hare after the 50-50 ball, he is content to often stroll, making his mark with a deft pass or quick burst.

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Along road back for

BERLIN (AFP) — It is a long road back for tennis player Andre Agassi.

The tragedy of her all-around period at the top of women's tennis has been to underline just how delicate the balance between triumph and despair for a top athlete.

At the beginning of 1996 she was the player to watch after she hit the peak of her career by winning the semi-finals of the Australian Open.

But she was stopped dead in her tracks by a serious injury.

She missed most of 1996 and since returning the courts she has been forced to endure a embarrassing and frustrating season of early exits.

And she would once again be expected to win.

From a career high of 10th in the WTA Tour, she has been reduced to 16th in the world rankings.

Those who expected her to win the match practice desperately lacks.

One of the most frustrating players to watch from the United States, Chanda had

wide attention when she beat Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the semi-finals of the 1996 Canadian Open, winning 6-4, 2-6, 16-14.

But her women's match at the event, lasting 23 minutes, the final set took 2hr 22mins.

The victory propelled her into the top 10 for the first time.

As well as excelling in singles, Chanda was even successful on the court, winning the Australian Open doubles — ironically with Arantxa.

But she hurt her wrist at the Lipton event. She had to try to come back after a couple of weeks and apart from a victory at the Lipton event, she had lost one set — she had lost one set — she had lost one set.

November. All the time she had built up.

Chanda kept busy off court. She conducts a lot of local clinics and for a local and state team.

She's been with the team since she was 14. She's been with the team since she was 14.

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Henman helps Sampras

ROME (AFP) — Tim Henman used his day off at the Italian Open to help his friend and doubles partner Pete Sampras.

The unseeded Oxford player had a practice session with Sampras in the morning before Sampras went on centre court to see off a first-round threat from Swede Thomas Enqvist 7-6 (7/5), 6-4.

Henman, 17th on the ATP Tour computer, also fulfilled an interview session arranged by the Tour as he killed time awaiting Tuesday's night session featuring third seed Marcelo Rios and Italian wild card entry Marzio Martelli.

The Briton will now play Rios on Wednesday afternoon after the former World No.1 romped to a 6-3, 6-0 win.

Rios went out early last week in Hamburg, losing his first match against South African Wayne Ferreira.

The Chilean missed a month of play with an elbow injury after becoming World No.1 at the end of March after a victory over Andre Agassi for the title at the Lipton Championships in Florida.

Henman says he is gaining confidence on the clay with each victory.

"This has been the most I've practiced ever," Henman said of his hard work on the most difficult of surfaces for British contenders.

"I've hit so many balls that I feel confident that I can stay in rallies for much longer than usual."

Henman knows that no opponent will be easy on the red clay.

"You must start from word go, or you'll get punished," he said. "You can never let up at any time, you must play every point with the same intensity."

A long road back for Rubin

BERLIN (AFP) — It is a long road back for Chanda Rubin.

Remember Chanda Rubin?

The tragedy of her all-too-brief period at the top of women's tennis has served to underline just how delicate the balance is between triumph and despair for a top athlete.

At the beginning of 1996 she was the player to beat on the WTA Tour, but soon after she hit the peak of her career by reaching the semi-finals of the Australian Open she was stopped dead in her tracks by a serious wrist injury.

She missed most of 1996 and since returning to the courts she has been forced to endure a embarrassing and frustrating succession of early exits at events she would once have expected to win.

From a career high of six, Chanda slumped out of the top 50 in March, and has been reduced to playing in obscure satellite events in a vain effort to gain the match practice she desperately lacks.

Once one of the most promising players to emerge from the United States, Chanda gained worldwide attention when she beat Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the quarter-finals of the 1996 Australian Open, winning 6-4, 2-6, 16-14.

The battle was the longest women's match ever at the event, lasting 3hr 33mins. The final set alone took 2hr 22mins, and victory propelled Chanda into the top 10 for the first time.

As well as excelling in singles, Chanda was even more successful on the doubles court, winning the Australian Open doubles — ironically with Sanchez Vicario — as well titles at Oklahoma City, Indian Wells and Amelia Island.

Then she hurt her wrist at the Lipton event. She stopped trying to compete a couple of weeks later, and apart from a brief outing at Eastbourne — where she lasted just one set — she didn't hit the courts again until November. All the momentum she had built was gone.

Chanda kept busy off the court. She conducts at least a dozen clinics a year for local and state communities in Louisiana. She's involved with the American Heart Foundation and the Special Olympics, and she made a public service announcement on behalf of breast cancer awareness. But she'd rather be playing tennis. And winning.

"It was pretty frustrating," said Chanda with remarkable restraint. "I guess there is never a good time for an injury but it was tough for me because I'd reached my high and basically had to stop playing cold turkey from there."

"I didn't play for six months (except for Eastbourne in June), not even picking up a racket, so that was a bit rough for me. But injury is something I think every player goes through to some degree, and I feel like I've come back from it pretty well."

"I just try to keep focused and stay positive and keep trying to move forward. It's really all I can do at this time."

After a year of trying to make it back, Chanda could look back on 1997 with only limited satisfaction. One bright moment occurred in January, when she joined with Justin Gimelstob to win the Hopman Cup for the United States, beating Iva Majoli, Amanda Coetzer and Nicole Pietrangeli, and then she reached the fourth round of the Australian Open. She also won a small tournament in Linz, beating Jana Novotna in the semi-finals.

Those victories offered evidence that her talent was just laying dormant, but consistency proved to be elusive.

And 1998 has proved to be no better. To date she has suffered five opening round defeats, including one at a small-time satellite event in Michigan. Her latest setback came at the German Open in Berlin this week, when she was beaten 6-4, 6-2 by Barbara Paulus on Tuesday.

"It's tough," she admits. "There have been moments when I've doubted if I could make it back, but I've always come out of it, always keep the main thought in mind, to go out and play the game I like to play it."

"The results aren't what I'm focusing on now. I just want to go out and compete hard, work hard, and enjoy the game and hit out on my shots. I don't want to let any type of fear or tentativeness creep in."

"It's difficult when you're losing and you don't feel like you're playing the way that you can play. But everybody loses at some point, then one match can turn it around. I just need to keep going out and stay positive and try to improve, just to start from somewhere and not think of anything else."

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Study warns on danger of heading a football

SYDNEY (AFP) — A review into injuries related to heading a football said on Wednesday that there was a good case for protective headgear to be worn by inexperienced players.

Sports physiotherapist and review author Glen Dods, who played international football for New Zealand, said the practice was particularly risky for the young.

He found many football players suffered early degeneration of the lower spine and some brain injuries similar to boxers.

The Australian reported. Simple preventive measures could reduce the risk, such as using water resistant balls and balls of the correct size.

"Schoolchildren are definitely at risk because equipment is generally not up to standard and coaching levels are still well short of being satisfactory," he said.

"If you don't use the right-sized ball or are using an old ball that has lost its coating and its ability to resist water, there are real potential problems."

A waterlogged ball could almost knock you out, the review said.

"A study published in the American Journal of Sports Medicine in 1991 and cited in Dods report shows a professional football player receives up to 5,250 impacts to the head in a 15-year career, excluding training sessions."

"I can generally pick an old soccer player by their bad ankles and grotty lower cervical spines," he said.

UAE's Bin Sulayyem looks for record 8th Jordan Rally title

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein Thursday gives the start signal for the 23-stage 16th Jordan International Rally in which over 27 competitors are expected to take part.

The country's most prestigious auto sports event, which forms the second round of the Middle East Rally Championship, includes 300-580 kilometres of special stages.

The Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) have completed preparations for the two-day rally in which seven time champion Mohammad Bin Sulayyem of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will be driving a Ford Escort seeking to further boost his Jordan Rally record.

Cypriot Andreas Tsoulifas who took second place in 1995, third in 1996 and fourth last year is expected to challenge Bin Sulayyem together with a host of Jordanian competitors.

Nine-time Middle East champion Bin Sulayyem leads the 1998 Middle East Championship after winning the inaugural Oman and UAE rallies.

The regional championship includes rallies in Lebanon, Kuwait, Qatar, Cyprus and Dubai.

This year's top Jordanian competitors will be Bashar Bustami, Mohammad and Ahmad Daoud. The trio have won the Jordan Drives Open championship.

Ahmad's co-driver will be Malek Hariri, in a Ford Cosworth, while Bustami will be partnering Raffi Bilemjan in a Mitsubishi Lancer.

Mohammad will be driving a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution. He was Jordan's top competitor last year, finishing 4th overall.

Previous Jordanian champion Amjad Farrah is also in the rally with partner Faisal Sa'doun.

The only woman in the rally will be Fiona Mulcahy in a Peugeot 205 GTI.

Organising Committee Chairman Hasan Al-Edin said this year's Jordan Rally will be the longest of the regional rallies with 13 special asphalt stages on the first day.



Mohammad Bin Sulayyem drives his Ford during one of the stages of the Oman Rally earlier this year

Year	entrants	starters	finishers
1981	36	34	13
1982	29	27	17
1983	30	25	6
1984	31	29	12
1985	38	35	15
1986	50	40	15
1987	48	35	19
1988	36	32	10
1990	40	32	15
1992	41	38	15
1993	39	36	13
1994	46	38	22
1995	36	26	15
1996	32	27	12
1997	38	25	15

JORDAN RALLY RECORD

1981	Michel Saleh/Lebanon	Toyota Celica GT
1982	Michel Saleh/Lebanon	Toyota Celica GT
1983	Saeed Al Hajiri/Qatar	Opel Manta 400
1984	Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE	Toyota Celica Turbo
1985	Saeed Al Hajiri/Qatar	Porsche 911 SCRS
1986	Saeed Al Hajiri/Qatar	Porsche 911 SCRS
1987	Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE	Toyota Celica Twincam Turbo
1988	Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE	Toyota Celica Twincam Turbo
1990	Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE	Toyota Celica GT4
1992	Abbas Mosawi/Qatar	Toyota Celica GT4
1993	Sheikh Hamad Al Thani/Qatar	Mitsubishi Gallant VR4
1994	Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE	Ford Escort RS Cosworth
1995	Abdullah Bakhashab/S. Arabia	Ford Escort Cosworth
1996	Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE	Ford Escort Cosworth
1997	Moh'd Bin Sulayyem/UAE	Ford Escort Cosworth

No Jordanian has won the rally since it started in 1981. The best Jordanian showing was third place finishes by Ziyad Bustami in 1981, HRH Prince Abdullah in 1986 and 1988, Hani Bisharat in 1987. Amjad Farrah in 1993, and Ma'rouf Abu Samra in 1995. Winding asphalt stages will test the drivers on the

first day with special stages starting in Ruman Forest, Slehi, Iraq Al Amir, the Dead Sea, Mushaqqar, Mousa Springs, Mount Nebo, Mahes, Iraq Al Amir, Mushaqqar, Mousa Springs, Mount Nebo and ending in Dar el Dawa.

Desert tracks on the second day will be the ultimate test of experience, stamina and well-maintained and sponsored teams.

Starting at 7:30 a.m. ten special stages will take drivers to the south of the country through Tunab, Daba'a, Salaya, Mudeisat, Daba'a, Swaga, Daba'a, Salaya, Mudeisat and Tunab.

The rally will end at around 6:00 p.m. Friday. Competitors represent the UAE, Ireland, Cyprus, Qatar, Kuwait, Australia, Oman, Great Britain, and Germany.

The FIA stewards of the event are Wilhelm Lyding from Germany and Derek Ledger from Jordan.

Last year, twenty-five cars started the rally which included 19 stages, including 11 asphalt stages on the first day. Fifteen drivers, including five Jordanians finished the rally.

Blatter outlines manifesto with populist overtones

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — FIFA presidential candidate Sepp Blatter took his campaign to the Asian Football Confederation congress here on Wednesday as he outlined a populist manifesto.

Under his presidency, Blatter said every professional footballer in the world would be insured while a more integrated approach would be adopted towards development of the sport.

"I am for continuity in the programmes we have evolved in FIFA so far," said the incumbent FIFA general secretary.

retary, who is on leave from his duties to campaign to become Joao Havelange's successor.

An election will be held at a FIFA congress in Paris on June 8.

UEFA chief Lennart Johansson is the other candidate in an increasingly bitter battle to succeed the 82-year-old Havelange who has ruled football like a potentate since 1974.

Blatter, 62, who has been general secretary of FIFA since 1981, said he was not averse to swimming in Havelange's slipstream.

"I intend to adopt and adapt the development programmes and competitions already in place," he told reporters.

He pledged a more "hands-on" management style as compared to Havelange's which he described as that of an overseer.

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HONOLULU (R) — Miss Trinidad and Tobago, Wendy Fitzwilliam, a 25-year-old law student who aspires to be a diplomat, was crowned Miss Universe at the pageant's finale in Honolulu Tuesday.

Ms. Fitzwilliam triumphed in an internationally-broadcast event which featured male dancers in Hawaiian costume, some twirling flaming staffs around their heads and between their legs as the final 10 women chosen by judges paraded in swimsuits.

Ms. Fitzwilliam, in a telephone interview, said her legal training had helped her keep her composure.

"I am a law student, every Friday I have to stand there in front of a judge in mock trials and do it," she told Reuters, adding that facing real judges at short notice helped her develop "my calm, my ability to stand there and think clearly."

Ms. Fitzwilliam, of Diego Martin in northwest Trinidad, beat Miss Venezuela, 18-year-old Veruska Ramirez, who was declared first runner-up.

Miss Puerto Rico, 23-year-old Joyce Giraud, was second runner-up.

Organisers said the competition, dismissed by some critics as an anachronism which insults women, was given a complete make-over this year to reflect "the ideals and goals of women today."

The swimsuit section was accompanied by an evening gown section and brief interviews with the contestants, during which Ms. Fitzwilliam broke into an apparently impromptu jazz ditty and told judges: "I know how to party."

She said she wanted to use her studies in international law to become a diplomat and work for greater unity between Caribbean nations.

Asked how it felt to end up vying centre-stage with the representative of four-times winner Venezuela, Trinidad's nearest neighbour with which it has had sometimes tense relations over oil and fishing rights, Ms. Fitzwilliam replied:

"Things are not as tense as they were a few months ago, hopefully they'll stay that way but if not, I am up to the job."

Trinidad, the most southerly Caribbean island, lies just seven miles off the coast of Venezuela.

Representatives of 81 countries took part in the competition this year.

In Trinidad and Tobago, celebrations broke out in pubs, clubs and homes across both islands to mark the occasion.

TEL AVIV (AP) — Women singers have been barred from performing at Israel's presidential inauguration in parliament to avoid offending religious legislators, an Israeli parliament spokesman said Wednesday.

In protest, 10 secular legislators said they would stay away from Monday's ceremony which will usher in Israeli President Ezer Weizman's second five-year term.

The row was yet another sign of the increasingly acrimonious dispute between religious and secular Israelis over the role of religion in daily life.

In the past two weeks, the two camps have faced off over whether a modern dance troupe could perform semi-nude at an official function and whether a transsexual singer should have represented the Jewish state in Europe's largest song contest.

At issue in the latest spat is the belief of ultra-Orthodox Jews that men should not listen to women singing for fear it will arouse them sexually.

Menachem Friedman, an expert on Israel's religious society, said this prohibition is increasingly being observed also among less fervent Jews. "It's part of the process of fundamentalism and radicalism within Israel's society," Mr. Friedman said.

Up until 1988, mixed choirs sang at the inauguration ceremony, but in 1993, when Mr. Weizman was sworn in for his first term, a man, the army's chief cantor, performed.

This year, an army quartet consisting of three women and a man will perform at a reception in the parliament building, but only the male soldier will sing in the ceremony in the plenum, said Israeli Parliamentary Secretary General Arieh Hahn.

"We think that the president represents the national consensus and we should avoid offending any section of the public," Gen. Hahn told Israel Radio.

Israeli Labour Party legislator Yael Dayan, who is among those boycotting the ceremony, said this change was "a symptom of the growing power of the religious parties."

BONN (AP) — Two German diplomatic envoys have held talks with Iranian officials in Tehran on improving relations, the German foreign ministry said Wednesday.

The two-day visit that ended Tuesday was believed to be the first to the Iranian capital by German foreign ministry officials in 1-1/2 years.

It was the latest sign of European interest in resuming full ties with Tehran since moderate Mohammad Khatami was elected as Iran's president last summer.

The two sides conducted a "comprehensive review" of bilateral relations, German foreign ministry spokesman Martin Erdmann said. He refused to go into details.

However, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel had said that the envoys would discuss the case of German businessman Helmut Hofer.

Mr. Hofer was sentenced to death in January under Islamic law for having sex with a 26-year-old medical student, because she was Muslim and he was not. He has appealed the sentence claiming he converted to Islam several years ago.

Mr. Kinkel has said that executing Mr. Hofer would damage relations with Iran.

Mr. Kinkel and his Iranian counterpart, Kamal Kharrazi, arranged the Tehran talks in a telephone call several weeks ago. Mr. Erdmann said. The German delegation was led by Peter Dingsen, head of the German foreign ministry's Middle East desk.

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Commission urged the 15 European Union (EU) member states on Wednesday to deny trade privileges to Jewish produce from the Israeli-occupied territories, EU sources said.

The Commission recommended that produce imported from Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, the Golan Heights and Arah east Jerusalem, be excluded from the agreement which allows Israeli exports to enter the EU duty-free or with reduced tariffs.

The Commission said these settlements could not be regarded as integral parts of the state of Israel.

It considered that the 1995 EU-Israel association accord only applied to Israeli territory within the borders which were internationally-recognised before the 1967 Six-Day war.

On Apr. 23, the Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot newspaper reported that the EU had drawn up a blacklist of goods which would be subjected to steep import duties because of European dissatisfaction with the Israeli government's political stance toward the occupied Palestinian territories.

Citing classified reports from the Israeli embassy in Brussels, the newspaper said the list includes wine, farm produce, processed foods and flowers coming from Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

According to Israeli officials, the Paris economic protocols attached to the Oslo peace agreements with the Palestinians extend the customs exemptions for Israeli goods to products from the Palestinian autonomous areas and the settlements.

Victor Harel, deputy director-general for economic affairs at the foreign ministry, warned that if the reported EU initiative was implemented, "Israel would see it as a serious breach of the economic sections of the Oslo accords."

'It is not in my interest... to mislead the secretary of state'

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation said Wednesday that nuclear parts stolen last week were only welding samples and were not important.

"The metals carried by this truck were just ordinary parts of welding samples and they were not of any significance," the organisation said in a statement carried by the official IRNA news agency.

The newspaper Farda (Tomorrow) reported last week that a truck belonging to the organisation was stolen while carrying an "unidentified piece" from the controversial Bushehr nuclear power station near the Gulf.

BAGHDAD (AP) — The United Nations is unhappy about some aspects of Iraq's food distribution plan for the next stage of the oil-for-food programme, the top U.N. humanitarian official in Baghdad said Wednesday.

"I am concerned about some differences of view between the government and the United Nations as to the best possible use of the limited resources under Security Council Resolution 986," the official, Denis Halliday, told reporters.

The resolution set up the oil-for-food plan allowing Iraq to export \$2 billion in oil each six months to buy humanitarian goods for its 22 million people.

The third stage of the programme ends June 3, and oil exports will be upgraded to \$5.2 billion in the next stage.

The programme is an exception to the ban on oil exports under U.N. Security Council sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Mr. Halliday's spokesman, Eric Falt, said the Iraqi government was "very close" to sending the draft of its food distribution plan to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan for approval.

He said there were "a few questions" about matching Iraq's plan to Mr. Annan's recommendations.

He wouldn't name the differences, but he said they mainly concerned items to be included in the food basket and whether funding for certain sectors like telecommunications is really needed now.

Iraq's import bill for the fourth phase is about \$3 billion, Mr. Falt said. He declined comment when asked whether Iraq will be able to generate the money since it has to allocate 30 per cent of all oil revenues to a Gulf war reparations fund.

Senior Iraqi oil officials have judged they can only export \$4 billion in six months and only if the United Nations allows them to import \$300 million in parts to rehabilitate the oil industry.

The Security Council has yet to act on Mr. Annan's recommendation to allow purchase of the parts.

Mr. Halliday said he was concerned about the delay and feared it would have a negative impact on Iraq's pumping capabilities.

In the past, Iraq has delayed the start of each stage of the oil-for-food plan until it got formal U.N. approval for its food distribution plan.

Mr. Falt said the current phase of the programme has brought a notable improvement in the pace of U.N. approval of contracts, noting the time required for each contract was cut from 68 days to 28.

A total of 1,711 contracts has been approved since the start of the programme in December 1996. More than 5 million tons of food and other humanitarian supplies have reached Iraq.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's ability to pursue U.S. diplomacy was questioned by a Republican senator Tuesday in light of Washington's tensions with Israel.

"I think there's a serious question of competency on the part of the secretary of state," U.S. Senator Arlen Specter told reporters after emerging from a closed meeting between senators and Ms. Albright.

Asked if Ms. Albright should resign, he said, "I'm not prepared to answer that question."

After more than two hours. Ms. Albright late Tuesday said only that her meeting went "very well."

But Sen. Specter suggested she had not made any progress in tempering criticism from senators, many of whom are strong supporters of Israel.

He said that Ms. Albright asserted that Israel had never been presented with an "ultimatum" over its position on withdrawal from the West Bank. Ms. Albright had invited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Washington on condition that he accept a 13 per cent withdrawal from the West Bank.

Sen. Specter was incredulous at Ms. Albright's remarks.

"That's a flat out ultimatum," he said of the condition set for the meeting.

"It is obvious the United States is trying to articulate a [West Bank] satisfactory position that would satisfy Arafat," he added, referring to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

Sen. Specter said that Israel alone could determine its security needs.

Ms. Albright is due to meet with Mr. Netanyahu here Wednesday.

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Hopes for peace in war-ravaged Somalia receded further on Wednesday with the announcement that a conference to discuss the establishment of a government in the anarchic country has been cancelled.

The national reconciliation conference scheduled for Friday in the south-central town of Baidoa was cancelled because of continuing factional hostilities and lack of funds, an official told AFP.

"The meeting is not taking place and no arrangements are being made for the long-awaited conference," said Mohammad Ramadan Arbow, the information secretary for the umbrella National Salvation Council (NSC), grouping 26 factions.

Mr. Arbow said the idea of holding the conference — which was agreed upon by the 26 factions in Cairo in December to discuss setting up a transitional national government — was likely to be abandoned entirely.

Somali factions have failed to implement 11 other peace accords they have signed since 1995.

The Baidoa conference had earlier been postponed three times.

Six factions in the Hiran region of central Somalia said they would not take part in the Baidoa conference, claiming it

did not have the blessing of all Somalis, the Qaran newspaper reported Wednesday.

The factions have started training their own armed forces to defend the region, the newspaper added.

In Somalia's northeast, clan leaders will Friday meet to establish their own regional government, similar to one in the northwestern region known as Somaliland which seceded in 1991.

Mogadishu's two main warlords, Hussein Mohammad Aidede and Ali Mahdi Mohammad, are on Thursday expected to unveil a joint administration for the war-torn capital and announce another date for the Baidoa conference.

LONDON (AFP) — British pop star Elton John has decided to split from his friend and manager of 27 years, John Reid, as a result of a stormy row between them, the London Evening Standard reported. Reid, 47, is credited as the man who turned young singer Reginald Dwight into Elton John, a world renowned performer with a track record of Gold discs and a knighthood for services to charity. John's record company declined to confirm the report.

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf presented veteran musicians Ray Charles and Ravi Shankar with the 1998 Polar Music Prize, considered the Nobel prize of music. The two musicians, who shared the stage at the Berwald Concert Hall in Stockholm, each received a cash prize worth \$125,000. "It is the greatest day of my life," said Charles, 67, known for his rhythm-and-blues songs and jazz-influenced music. He said he planned to spend the money as quickly as possible. Shankar, the 78-year-old Indian composer who made the sitar a household word in the West, said he would use his prize money to support promising musicians and preserve old Indian music.

LONDON (AFP) — The bride wore white, the groom threw open the doors of his 15th-century castle and a galaxy of stars turned up for the glitzy high society wedding of aristocratic filmmaker Henry Dent-Brocklehurst. The multi-millionaire, 31, was regarded as one of Britain's most eligible bachelors until he married 24-year-old Hawaiian-born model Lili Malesse in a wedding with a Hawaiian theme at Sudeley Castle in western England. Among the guests were his godmother Camilla Parker Bowles, the companion of Prince Charles, acting glamour couple Hugh Grant and Elizabeth Hurley, supermodel Claudia Schiffer, Bryan Adams, and Mick Jagger. His wife Jerry Hall and their baby Gabriel.

PARIS (AFP)—Star ballerina Sylvie Guillem returns this month to the Paris Opera Ballet where she first made her name for two programming based on choreographies by Rudolf Nureyev. Guillem, 33, left the ballet in 1989 and last returned as a guest star in May 1994. She will dance the role of Kiti Opposite Nicolas Le Riche's Basilio in a Nureyev choreographed version of "Don Quixote" on May 26 and 29. The ballet is being staged a total of 15 times between May 16 and Jun. 6. Guillem then returns on Jun. 26 and

LAUSANNE (AFP) — Inmates of a prison in the western Swiss canton of Valais spent their time making fake 100 Swiss franc (\$66) notes, a report from the region's penitentiary service said this week. The counterfeit notes were discovered in the cells of two inmates. They were probably made with the help of prisoners'.

The huge crowd gathered with great interest and the future of the city of New Orleans was discussed in many ways. The speaker was very interesting and the speaker was very interesting and the speaker was very interesting.

[illegible]

...the Israeli army for sparking violent and destructive marches in the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) announced on the 14th, the "catastrophe."

...acted army snipers of internationally killed 100 in the Palestinian health ministry said, the death toll in Israel. They were buried quickly on the 15th.

...years of Palestinian, many died Friday 30th. The Israeli troops in widespread clashes with Palestinians died, hospital officials said.

...of Shuhada had been declared officially as maintained on an artificial life support.

the use of snipers, the use of soldiers and the sentrying," Mr. Ararat told the Prime Minister's Council. "The use of snipers is a barbaric act of terrorism. The use of soldiers and the sentrying is a violation of the rights of the citizens of the United States," this time for talks on U.S. proposals to end the peace process, accused the U.S. of "a premeditated attempt to influence the peace process by the use of force," which he said had led to "tragic" loss of life and Palestinian deaths.

U.S. peace proposals were likely to fuel outbreaks of violence can he expected it to honour its commitments, notably of the West Bank," said Nassef Bani, an Israeli leader and key architect of the Oslo Accords, the reaction of Al Qaida University officials, agreed.

processes are inevitable, given the popular process, he said.

MEIR SALEM
Rabbi on Friday
helped to help
Palestinians in im-
mense Jewish neigh-
borhoods.
The attack on
a 51-year-old
rabbi was killed.
The attack ended in
the court of the
Jewish community in
Meir Shalom
and issued a
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Power played
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